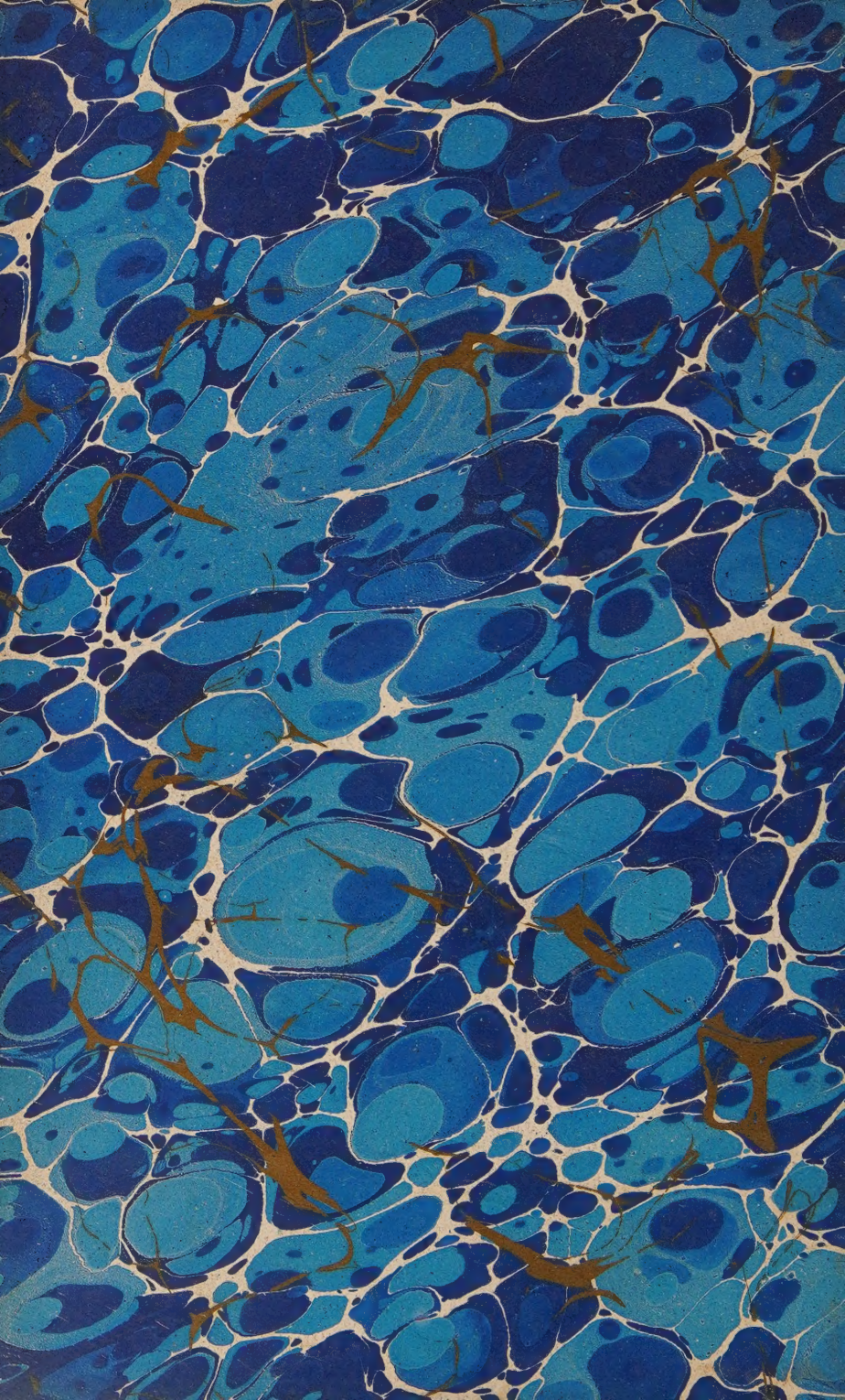

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ARROWS OF THE CHACE

BEING

A COLLECTION OF SCATTERED LETTERS

PUBLISHED CHIEFLY IN THE DAILY NEWSPAPERS,—1840-1880

BY

JOHN RUSKIN, LL.D, D.C.L.,

HONORARY STUDENT OF CHRIST CHURCH, AND HONORARY FELLOW OF CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE, OXFORD,

AND NOW EDITED BY

An Oxford Pupil.

WITH PREFACE BY THE AUTHOR.

Volume I.—Letters on Art and Science.

GEORGE ALLEN,
SUNNYSIDE, ORPINGTON, KENT.
1880.

[*All Rights reserved.*]

"I NEVER WROTE A LETTER IN MY LIFE WHICH ALL THE WORLD ARE NOT WELCOME TO READ IF THEY WILL."

Fors Clavigera, Letter 59, 1875, p. 311.

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

MY good Editor insists that this book must have an Author's Preface; and insists further that it shall not contain compliments to him on the editorship. I must leave, therefore, any readers who care for the book, and comprehend the trouble that has been spent on it, to pay him their own compliments, as the successive service of his notes may call for them: but my obedience to his order, not in itself easy to me, doubles the difficulty I have in doing what nevertheless, I am resolved to do,—pay, that is to say, several extremely fine compliments to myself, upon the quality of the text.

For of course I have read none of these letters since they were first printed: of half of them I had forgotten the contents, of some, the existence; all come fresh to me; and here in Rouen, where I thought nothing could possibly have kept me from

drawing all I could of the remnants of the old town, I find myself, instead, lying in bed in the morning, reading these remnants of my old self,—and that with much contentment and thankful applause.

For here are a series of letters ranging over a period of, broadly, forty years of my life; most of them written hastily, and all in hours snatched from heavier work: and in the entire mass of them there is not a word I wish to change, not a statement I have to retract, and, I believe, few pieces of advice, which the reader will not find it for his good to act upon.

With which brief preface I am, for my own part, content; but as it is one of an unusual tenour, and may be thought by some of my friends, and all my foes, more candid than graceful, I permit myself the apologetic egotism of enforcing one or two of the points in which I find these letters so well worth—their author's—reading.

In the building of a large book, there are always places where an indulged diffuseness weakens the fancy, and prolonged strain subdues the energy: when we have time to say all we wish, we usually wish to say more than enough; and there are few

subjects we can have the pride of exhausting, without wearying the listener. But all these letters were written with fully provoked zeal, under strict allowance of space and time: they contain the choicest and most needful things I could within narrow limits say, out of many contending to be said; expressed with deliberate precision; and recommended by the best art I had in illustration or emphasis. At the time of my life in which most of them were composed, I was fonder of metaphor, and more fertile in simile, than I am now; and I employed both with franker trust in the reader's intelligence. Carefully chosen, they are always a powerful means of concentration; and I could then dismiss in six words, "thistledown without seeds, and bubbles without colour," forms of art on which I should now perhaps spend half a page of analytic vituperation; and represent, with a pleasant accuracy which my best methods of outline and exposition could now no more achieve, the entire system of modern plutocratic policy, under the luckily remembered image of the Arabian bridegroom, bewitched with his heels uppermost.

It is to be remembered also that many of the subjects handled can be more conveniently treated

controversially, than directly; the answer to a single question may be made clearer than a statement which endeavours to anticipate many; and the crystalline vigour of a truth is often best seen in the course of its serene collision with a trembling and dissolving fallacy. But there is a deeper reason than any such accidental ones for the quality of this book. Since the letters cost me, as aforesaid, much trouble; since they interrupted me in pleasant work which was usually liable to take harm by interruption; and since they were likely almost, in the degree of their force, to be refused by the editors of the adverse journals, I never was tempted into writing a word for the public press, unless concerning matters which I had much at heart. And the issue is, therefore, that the two following volumes contain very nearly the indices of everything I have deeply cared for during the last forty years; while not a few of their political notices relate to events of more profound historical importance than any others that have occurred during the period they cover; and it has not been an uneventful one.

Nor have the events been without gravity; the greater, because they have all been inconclusive.

Their true conclusions are perhaps nearer than any of us apprehend; and the part I may be forced to take in them, though I am old,—perhaps I should rather say, *because* I am old,—will, as far as I can either judge or resolve, be not merely literary.

Whether I am spared to put into act anything here designed for my country's help, or am shielded by death from the sight of her remediless sorrow, I have already done for her as much service as she has will to receive, by laying before her facts vital to her existence, and unalterable by her power, in words of which not one has been warped by interest nor weakened by fear; and which are as pure from selfish passion as if they were spoken already out of another world.

J. RUSKIN.

Rouen, St. Firmin's Day, 1880.

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

SOME words are needed by way of a general note to the present volumes in explanation of the principles upon which they have been edited. It is, however, first due to the compiler of the Bibliography of Mr. Ruskin's writings,* to state in what measure this book has been prompted and assisted by his previous labours. Already acquainted with some few of the letters which Mr. Ruskin had addressed at various times to the different organs of the daily press, or which had indirectly found their way there, it was not until I came across the Bibliography that I was encouraged to complete and arrange a collection of these scattered portions of his thought. When I had done this, I ventured to submit the whole number of the letters to their author, and to ask

* "The Bibliography of Ruskin: a bibliographical list, arranged in chronological order, of the published writings of John Ruskin, M.A. (From 1834 to 1879.)" By Richard Herne Shepherd.

him if, after taking two or three of them as examples of the rest, he would not consider the advisability of himself republishing, if not all, at least a selected few. In reply, he was good enough to put me in communication with his publisher, and to request me to edit any or all of the letters without further reference to him.

I have, therefore, to point out that except for that request, or rather sanction; for the preface which he has promised to add after my work upon the volumes is finished; and for the title which it bears, Mr. Ruskin is in no way responsible for this edition of his letters. I knew, indeed, from the words of 'Fors Clavigera' which are printed as a motto to the book, that I ran little risk of his disapproval in determining to print, not a selection, but the whole number of letters in question; and I felt certain that the completeness of the collection would be considered a first essential by most of its readers, who are thus assured that the present volumes contain, with but two exceptions, every letter mentioned in the last edition of the bibliography, and some few more beside, which have been either printed or discovered since its publication.

The two exceptions are, first, the series of letters on

the Lord's Prayer which appeared in the pages of the *Contemporary Review* last December; and, secondly, some half-dozen upon 'A Museum or Picture Gallery,' printed in the *Art Journal* of last June and August. It seemed that both these sets of letters were really more akin to review articles cast in an epistolary form, and would thus find fitter place in a collection of such papers than in the present volumes; and for the omission of the second set there was a still further reason in the fact that the series is not yet completed.* On the other hand, the recent circular on the proposed interference with St. Mark's, Venice, is included in the first, and one or two other extraneous matters in the second volume, for reasons which their connection with the letters amongst which they are placed will make sufficiently clear.

The letters are reprinted word for word, and almost stop for stop, from the newspapers and other pages

* The letter out of which it took its rise, however, will be found on the 82nd page of the first volume; and with regard to it, and especially to the mention of Mr. Frith's picture in it, reference should be made to part of a further letter in the *Art Journal* of this month.

"I owe some apology, by the way, to Mr. Frith, for the way I spoke of his picture in my letter to the Leicester committee, not intended for publication, though I never write what I would not allow to be published, and was glad that they asked leave to print it." (*Art Journal*, August 1880, where this sentence is further explained.)

in which they first appeared. To ensure this accuracy was not an easy matter, and to it there are a few intentional exceptions. A few misprints have been corrected, such as that of 'Fat Bard' for 'Fort Bard' (vol. i. p. 147); and now and then the punctuation has been changed, as on the 256th page of the same volume, where a comma, placed in the original print of the letter between the words 'visibly' and 'owing,' quite confused the sentence. To these slight alterations may be added others still less important, such as the commencement of a fresh paragraph, or the closing up of an existing one, to suit the composition of the type, which the number of notes rendered unusually tiresome. The title of a letter, too, is not always that provided it by the newspaper; in some cases it seemed well to rechristen, in others it was necessary to christen a letter, though the former has never been done where it was at all possible that the existing title (for which reference can always be made to the bibliography) was one given to it by Mr. Ruskin himself.

The classification of the letters is well enough shown by the tables of contents. The advantages of a topical over a chronological arrangement appeared beyond all doubt; whilst the addition to

each volume of a chronological list of the letters contained in it, and the further addition to the second volume of a similar list of all the letters contained in the book, and of a full index, will, it is hoped, increase the usefulness of the work.

The beautiful engraving which forms the frontispiece of the first volume originally formed that of 'The Oxford Museum.' The plate was but little used in the apparently small edition of that book, and was thus found to be in excellent state for further use here. The woodcut of the chesnut spandril (vol. i. p. 212) is copied from one which may also be found in 'The Oxford Museum.' The facsimile of part of one of the letters is not quite satisfactory, the lines being somewhat thicker than they should be, but it answers its present purpose.

Lastly, the chief difficulty of editing these letters has been in regard to the notes, and has lain not so much in obtaining the necessary information as in deciding what use to make of it when obtained. The first point was, of course, to put the reader of the present volumes in possession of every fact which would have been common knowledge at the time when such and such a letter was written; but beyond this there were various allusions, which

might be thought to need explanation; quotations, the exact reference to which might be convenient; and so forth. Some notes, therefore, of this character have been also added, whilst some few which were omitted, either intentionally or by accident, from the body of the work, may be found on reference to the index.*

The effort to make the book complete has induced the notice of slight variations of text in one or two cases, especially in the reprint of the St. Mark's Circular. The space occupied by such notes is small, the interest which a few students take in the facts they notice really great, and the appearance of pedantry to some readers is thus risked in order to meet the special wish of others. The same effort will account for the reappearance of one or two really unimportant letters in the Appendix to the second volume, which contains also some few letters the nature of which is rather personal than public.

I have asked Mr. Ruskin to state in his preface to the book the value he may set upon it in

* Some of the notes, it will be remarked, are in larger type than the rest; these are Mr. Ruskin's original notes to the letters as first published, and are in fact part of them; and they are so printed to distinguish them from the other notes, for which I am responsible.

relation to his other and more connected work; and for the rest, I have only to add that the editing of it has been the pleasant labour of my leisure for more than two years past, and to express my hope that these scattered arrows, some from the bow of 'An Oxford Graduate,' some from that of an Oxford Professor, may not have been vainly winged anew by

AN OXFORD PUPIL.

October, 1880.

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF THE LETTERS

NOTE.—*In the second and third columns the bracketed words and figures are more or*

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GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE & OXFORD MUSEUM, I.	[. . . .
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LETTERS ON ART.

I.

ART CRITICISM AND ART EDUCATION.

'MODERN PAINTERS'; A REPLY. 1843.
ART CRITICISM. 1843.
THE ARTS AS A BRANCH OF EDUCATION. 1857.
ART TEACHING BY CORRESPONDENCE. 1860.

I.

ART CRITICISM AND ART EDUCATION.

From 'The Weekly Chronicle,' September 23, 1843.

'MODERN PAINTERS'; A REPLY.

To the Editor of 'The Weekly Chronicle.'

Sir,—I was much gratified by reading in your columns of the 15th* instant a piece of close, candid, and artistical criticism on my work entitled 'Modern Painters.' Serious and well-based criticism is at the present day so rare, and our periodicals are filled so universally with the splenetic jargon or meaningless praise of ignorance, that it is no small pleasure to an author to meet either with praise which he can view with patience, or censure which he can regard with respect. I seldom, therefore, read, and have never for an instant thought of noticing, the ordinary animadversions of the press; but the critique on "Modern Painters" in your pages is evidently the work of a man both of knowledge and feeling; and is at once so candid and so keen, so honest and so subtle,

* It should be 16th, the criticism having appeared in the preceding weekly issue.

that I am desirous of offering a few remarks on the points on which it principally touches—they are of importance to art; and I feel convinced that the writer is desirous only of elucidating truth, not of upholding a favourite error. With respect first to Gaspar's painting of the "Sacrifice of Isaac." It is not on the faith of any *single* shadow that I have pronounced the time intended to be near noon*—though the shadow of the two figures being very short, and cast *from* the spectator, is in itself conclusive. The whole system of chiaroscuro of the picture is lateral; and the light is expressly shown not to come from the distance by its breaking brightly on the bit of rock and waterfall on the left, from which the high copse wood altogether intercepts the rays proceeding from the horizon. There are multitudes of pictures by Gaspar with this same effect—leaving no doubt whatever on my mind that they are all manufactured by the same approved recipe, probably given him by Nicholas, but worked out by Gaspar

* See 'Modern Painters,' vol. i. p. 156 (Pt. II. § ii., cap. ii. § 5). "Again, take any important group of trees, I do not care whose, —Claude's, Salvator's, or Poussin's,—with lateral light (that in the Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca, or Gaspar's Sacrifice of Isaac, for instance); can it be supposed that those murky browns and melancholy greens are representative of the tints of leaves under full noonday sun?"—The picture in question is, it need hardly be said, in the National Gallery (No. 31).

with the clumsiness and vulgarity which are invariably attendant on the efforts of an inferior mind to realize the ideas of a greater. The Italian masters universally make the horizon the chief light of their picture, whether the effect intended be of noon or evening. Gaspar, to save himself the trouble of graduation, washes his sky half blue and half yellow, and separates the two colours by a line of cloud. In order to get his light conspicuous and clear, he washes the rest of his sky of a dark deep blue, without any thoughts about time of day or elevation of sun, or any such minutiæ; finally, having frequently found the convenience of a black foreground, with a bit of light coming in round the corner, and probably having no conception of the possibility of painting a foreground on any other principle, he naturally falls into the usual method —blackens it all over, touches in a few rays of lateral right, and turns out a very respectable article; for in such language only should we express the completion of a picture painted throughout on conventional principles, without one reference to nature, and without one idea of the painter's own. With respect to Salvator's "Mercury and the Woodman,"* your critic has not allowed for the effect of

* See 'Modern Painters,' vol. i. pp. 154-5 (Pt. II. § ii., cap. 2, § 4). The critic of the *Chronicle* had written that the rocky mountains

time on its blues. They are now, indeed, sobered and brought down, as is every other colour in the picture, until it is scarcely possible to distinguish any of the details in its darker parts; but they *have been* pure and clean, and the mountain is absolutely the same colour as the open part of the sky. When I say it is "in full light," I do not mean that it is the highest light of the picture, (for no distant mountain *can* be so, when compared with bright earth or white clouds,) but that no accidental shadow is cast upon it; that it is under open sky, and so illumined that there must necessarily be a difference in hue between its light and dark sides, at which Salvator has not even hinted.

Again, with respect to the question of focal distances,* your critic, in common with many very clever people to whom I have spoken on the

in this picture "are *not* sky-blue, neither are they near enough for detail of crag to be seen, neither are they in full light, but are quite as indistinct as they would be in nature, and just the colour." The picture is No. 84 in the National Gallery.

* See 'Modern Painters,' vol. i. p. 184 (Pt. II. § ii., cap. 4, § 6). "Turner introduced a new era in landscape art, by showing that the foreground might be sunk for the distance, and that it was possible to express immediate proximity to the spectator, without giving anything like completeness to the forms of the near objects. This, observe, is not done by slurred or soft lines, (always the sign of vice in art,) but by a decisive imperfection, a firm but partial assertion of form, which the eye feels indeed to be close home to it, and yet cannot

subject, has confused the obscurity of objects which are *laterally* out of the focal *range*, with that of objects which are *directly* out of the focal *distance*. If all objects in a landscape were in the same plane, they should be represented on the plane of the canvas with equal distinctness, because the eye has no greater lateral range on the canvas than in the landscape, and can only command a point in each. But this point in the landscape may present an intersection of lines belonging to different distances, —as when a branch of a tree, or tuft of grass, cuts against the horizon: and yet these different distances cannot be discerned together: we lose one if we look at the other, so that no painful intersection of lines is ever felt. But on the canvas, as the lines of foreground and of distance are on the *same* plane, they *will* be seen together whenever they intersect, painfully and distinctly; and, therefore, unless we make one series, whether near or distant, obscure and indefinite, we shall always represent as visible at once that which the eye can only perceive by two separate acts of seeing. Hold up your finger before this page, six inches from it. If you look at

rest upon, nor cling to, nor entirely understand, and from which it is driven away of necessity to those parts of distance on which it is intended to repose." To this the critic of the *Chronicle* had objected, attempting to show that it would result in Nature being "represented with just half the quantity of light and colour that she possesses."

the edge of your finger, you cannot see the letters; if you look at the letters, you cannot see the edge of your finger, but as a confused, double, misty line. Hence in painting, you must either take for your subject the finger or the letters; you cannot paint both distinctly without violation of truth. It is of no consequence how quick the change of the eye may be; it is not one whit quicker than its change from one part of the horizon to another, nor are the two intersecting distances more visible at the same time than two opposite portions of a landscape to which it passes in succession. Whenever, therefore, in a landscape, we look from the foreground to the distance, the foreground is subjected to *two* degrees of indistinctness: the first, that of an object *laterally* out of the focus of the eye; and the *second*, that of an object *directly* out of the focus of the eye; being too near to be seen with the focus adapted to the distance. In the picture, when we look from the foreground to the distance, the foreground is subjected only to *one* degree of indistinctness, that of being out of the lateral range; for as both the painting of the distance and of the foreground are on the same plane, they are seen together with the same focus. Hence we must supply the *second* degree of indistinctness by slurring with the brush, or we shall have a severe and

painful intersection of near and distant lines, impossible in nature. Finally, a very false principle is implied by part of what is advanced by your critic—which has led to infinite error in art, and should therefore be instantly combated whenever it were hinted—that the ideal is different from the true. It is, on the contrary, only the perfection of truth. The Apollo is not a *false* representation of man, but the most perfect representation of all that is constant and essential in man,—free from the accidents and evils which corrupt the truth of his nature.* Supposing we are describing to a naturalist some animal he does not know, and we tell him we saw one with a hump on its back, and another with strange bends in its legs, and another with a long tail, and another with no tail, he will ask us directly, But what is its *true* form, what is its *real* form? This truth, this reality, which he requires of us, is the *ideal* form, that which is hinted at by all the individuals,—aimed at, but not arrived at. But

* The passage in the *Chronicle* ran thus: "The Apollo is but an ideal of the human form; no figure ever moulded of flesh and blood was like it." With the objection to this criticism we may compare 'Modern Painters' (vol. i. p. 27), where the ideal is defined as "the utmost degree of beauty of which the species is capable." See also vol. ii. p. 99;—"The perfect *idea* of the form and condition in which all the properties of the species are fully developed is called the Ideal of the species;" and "That unfortunate distinctness between Idealism and Realism which leads most people to imagine that the Ideal is opposed to the Real, and therefore false."

never let it be said that, when a painter is defying the principles of nature at every roll of his brush, as I have shown that Gaspar does, when, instead of working out the essential characters of specific form, and raising those to their highest degree of nobility and beauty, he is casting all character aside, and carrying out imperfection and accident; never let it be said, in excuse for such degradation of nature, that it is done in pursuit of the ideal. As well might this be said in defence of the promising sketch of the human form pasted on the wainscoat behind the hope of the family—artist and musician of equal power—in the "Blind Fiddler."* Ideal beauty is the generalization of consummate knowledge, the concentration of perfect truth,—not the abortive vision of ignorance in its study. Nor was there ever yet one conception of the human mind beautiful, but as it was based on truth. Whenever we leave nature, we fall immeasurably beneath her. So, again, I find fault with the "ropy wreath" of Gaspar,† not because he chose massy cloud instead of light cloud; but because he has drawn his massy cloud *falsely*, making it

* This picture of Sir David Wilkie's was presented to the National Gallery (No. 99) by Sir George Beaumont, in 1826.

† The bank of cloud in the 'Sacrifice of Isaac' is spoken of in 'Modern Painters' (vol. i. p. 227, Pt. ii. § iii., cap. 3, § 7), as "a ropy, tough-looking wreath." On this the reviewer commented.

look tough and powerless, like a chain of Bologna sausages, instead of gifting it with the frangible and elastic vastness of nature's mountain vapour.

Finally, Sir, why must it be only "when he is gone from us"* that the power of our greatest English landscape painter is to be acknowledged? It cannot, indeed, be fully understood until the current of years has swept away the minor lights which stand around it, and left it burning alone; but at least the scoff and the sneer might be lashed into silence, if those only did their duty by whom it is already perceived. And let us not think that our unworthiness has no effect on the work of the master. I could be patient if I thought that *no* effect was wrought on his noble mind by the cry of the populace; but, scorn it as he may, and does, it is yet impossible for any human mind to hold on its course, with the same energy and life, through the oppression of a perpetual hissing, as when it is cheered on by the quick sympathy of its fellow-men. It is not in art as in matters of political duty, where the path is clear and the end visible. The springs of feeling may be oppressed or sealed

* "We agree" (wrote the *Chronicle*) "with the writer in almost every word he says about this great artist; and we have no doubt that, when he is gone from among us, his memory will receive the honour due to his living genius." See also the postscript to the first volume of 'Modern Painters' (pp. 422-3), written in June 1851.

by the want of an answer in other bosoms, though the sense of principle cannot be blunted except by the individual's *own* error; and though the knowledge of what is right, and the love of what is beautiful, may still support our great painter through the languor of age—and Heaven grant it may for years to come—yet we cannot hope that he will ever cast his spirit upon the canvas with the same freedom and fire as if he felt that the voice of its inspiration was waited for among men, and dwelt upon with devotion. Once, in ruder times, the work of a great painter * was waited for through

* Cimabue. The quarter of the town is yet named, from the rejoicing of that day, Borgo Allegri.† (*Original note to the letter: see editor's preface.*)

† The picture thus honoured was that of the Virgin, painted for the Church of Santa Maria Novella, where it now hangs in the Rucellai Chapel. "This work was an object of so much admiration to the people, . . . that it was carried in solemn procession, with the sound of trumpets and other festal demonstrations, from the house of Cimabue to the church, he himself being highly rewarded and honoured for it. It is further reported, and may be read in certain records of old painters, that whilst Cimabue was painting this picture in a garden near the gate of San Pietro, King Charles the Elder, of Anjou, passed through Florence, and the authorities of the city, among other marks of respect, conducted him to see the picture of Cimabue. When this work was shown to the king, it had not before been seen by any one; wherefore all the men and women of Florence hastened in great crowds to admire it, making all possible demonstrations of delight. The inhabitants of the neighbourhood, rejoicing in this occurrence, ever afterwards called that place Borgo Allegri; and this name it has since retained, although in process of

days at his door, and attended to its place of deposition by the enthusiasm of a hundred cities; and painting rose from that time, a rainbow upon the Seven Hills, and on the cypressed heights of Fiésole, guiding them and lighting them for ever, even in the stillness of their decay. How can we hope that England will ever win for herself such a crown, while the works of her highest intellects are set for the pointing of the finger and the sarcasm of the tongue, and the sole reward for the deep, earnest, holy labour of a devoted life, is the weight of stone upon the trampled grave, where the vain and idle crowd will come to wonder how the brushes are mimicked in the marble above the dust of him who wielded them in vain?

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

THE AUTHOR OF 'MODERN PAINTERS.'

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time it became enclosed within the walls of the city."—(Vasari, 'Lives of Painters.' Bohn's edition. London, 1850. Vol. i. p. 41.) This well-known anecdote may also be found in Jameson's 'Early Italian Painters,' p. 12.

From the 'Artist and Amateur's Magazine,' (edited by E. V. Rippingille,) January 1843, pp. 280—287.

ART CRITICISM.

[*To the Editor of the 'Artist and Amateur's Magazine.'*]

Sir,—Anticipating, with much interest, your reply to the candid and earnest inquiries of your unknown correspondent, Matilda Y.,* I am led to hope that you will allow me to have some share with you in the pleasant task of confirming an honest mind in the truth. Subject always to your animadversion and correction, so far as I may seem to you to be led astray by my peculiar love for the works of the artist to whom her letter refers, I yet trust that in most of the remarks I have to make on the points which have perplexed her, I shall be expressing not only your own

* This letter was written in reply to one signed 'Matilda Y.,' which had been printed in the *Artist and Amateur's Magazine*, p. 265, December 1843, and which related to the opposite opinions held by different critics of the works of Turner, which were praised by some as "beautiful and profoundly truthful representations of nature," whilst others declared them to be "executed without end, aim, or principle." "May not these contradictions," wrote the correspondent, in the passage alluded to by Mr. Ruskin, "be in a great measure the result of extreme ignorance of art in the great mass of those persons who take upon themselves the office of critics and reviewers? Can any one be a judge of art whose judgment is not founded on an accurate knowledge of nature? It is scarcely possible that a mere knowledge of pictures, however extensive, can qualify a man for the arduous and responsible duties of public criticism of art."

opinions, but those of every other accomplished artist who is really acquainted—and which of our English masters is not?—with the noble system of poetry and philosophy which has been put forth on canvass, during the last forty years, by the great painter who has presented us with the almost unparalleled example of a man winning for himself the unanimous plaudits of his generation and time, and then casting them away like dust, that he may build his monument—ære perennius.

Your correspondent herself, in saying that mere knowledge of *pictures* cannot qualify a man for the office of a critic, has touched the first source of the schisms of the present, and of all time, in questions of pictorial merit. We are overwhelmed with a tribe of critics who are fully imbued with every kind of knowledge which is useful to the picture-dealer, but with none that is important to the artist. They know where a picture *has* been retouched, but not where it *ought* to have been; they know if it has been injured, but not if the injury is to be regretted. They are unquestionable authorities in all matters relating to the panel or the canvass, to the varnish or the vehicle, while they remain in entire ignorance of that which the vehicle conveys. They are well acquainted with the technical qualities of every master's touch; and

when their discrimination fails, plume themselves on indisputable tradition, and point triumphantly to the documents of pictorial genealogy. But they never go *quite* far enough back; they stop *one* step short of the real original; they reach the human one, but never the Divine. Whatever, under the present system of study, the connoisseur of the gallery may learn or know, there is one thing he does *not* know,—and that is nature. It is a pitiable thing to hear a man like Dr. Waagen,* about to set the seal of his approbation, or the brand of his reprobation, on all the pictures in our island, expressing his insipid astonishment on his first acquaintance with the sea. "For the *first* time I understood the truth of their pictures (Backhuysen's and Van de Velde's,) and the refined art with which, by intervening dashes of sunshine, near or at a

* Gustav Friedrich Waagen, Director of the Berlin Gallery from 1832 until his death in 1868. He was the author of various works on art, amongst them one entitled 'Works of Art and Artists in England' (London, 1838), which is that alluded to here. The passage quoted concludes a description of his "first attempt to navigate the watery paths," in a voyage from Hamburg to the London Docks (vol. i. p. 13). His criticism of Turner may be found in the same work (vol. ii. p. 80), where commenting on Turner's 'Fishermen endeavouring to put their fish on board,' then, as now, in the gallery of Bridgewater House (No. 169), and which was painted as a rival to the great sea-storm of Vandevelde, he writes, that "in the truth of clouds and waves" . . . it is inferior to that picture, compared with which "it appears like a successful piece of scene-painting. The great crowd of

distance, and *ships to animate the scene*, they produce such a charming variety on the surface of the sea." For the first time!—and yet this gallery-bred judge, this discriminator of coloured shreds and canvass patches, who has no idea how ships animate the sea, until—charged with the fates of the Royal Academy—he ventures his invaluable person from Rotterdam to Greenwich, will walk up to the work of a man whose brow is hard with the spray of a hundred storms, and characterize it as "wanting in truth of clouds and waves"! Alas for Art, while such judges sit enthroned on their apathy to the beautiful, and their ignorance of the true, and with a canopy of canvass between them and the sky, and a wall of tradition, which may not be broken through, concealing from them the horizon, hurl their darkened verdicts against the works of men,

amateurs, who ask nothing more of the art, will always far prefer Turner's picture." Dr. Waagen revised and re-edited his book in a second, entitled, 'Treasures of Art in Great Britain' (1854), in which these passages are repeated with slight verbal alterations (vol. i. p. 3, vol. ii. p. 53). In this work he acknowledges his ignorance of Turner at the time the first was written, and gives a high estimate of his genius. "Buildings," he writes, "he treats with peculiar felicity, while *the sea* in its most varied aspects *is equally subservient to his magic brush*"!! He adds, that but for one deficiency, the want of a sound technical basis, he "should not hesitate to recognize Turner as the greatest landscape painter of all time"!—With regard, however, to the above-named picture, it may be remembered that Mr. Ruskin has himself instanced it as one of the marine pictures which Turner spoiled by imitation of Vandevelde,—('Pre-Raphaelitism,' p. 45).

whose night and noon have been wet with the dew of heaven,—dwelling on the deep sea, or wandering among the solitary places of the earth, until they have "made the mountains, waves, and skies a part, of them and of their souls."

When information so narrow is yet the whole stock in trade of the highest authorities of the day, what are we to expect from the lowest? Dr. Waagen is a most favourable specimen of the tribe of critics; a man, we may suppose, impartial, above all national or party prejudice, and intimately acquainted with that half of his subject (the technical half) which is all we can reasonably expect to be known by one who has been trained in the painting-room instead of in the fields. No authority is more incontrovertible in all questions of the genuineness of old pictures. He has at least the merit—not common among those who talk most of the old masters—of knowing what he *does* admire, and will not fall into the same raptures before an execrable copy as before the original. If, then, we find a man of this real judgment in those matters to which his attention has been directed, entirely incapable, owing to his ignorance of nature, of estimating a modern picture, what can we hope from those lower critics who are unacquainted even with those technical characters

which they have opportunities of learning? What, for instance, are we to anticipate from the sapient lucubrations of the critic—for some years back the disgrace of the pages of 'Blackwood'—who in one breath displays his knowledge of nature, by styling a painting of a furze bush in the bed of a mountain torrent a specimen of the "high pastoral," and in the next his knowledge of Art, by informing us that Mr. Lee "reminds him of Gainsborough's best manner, but is inferior to him in composition"! * We do not mean to say anything against Mr. Lee; but can we forbear to smile at the hopeless innocence of the man's novitiate, who could be reminded by them of landscapes powerful enough in colour to take their place beside those of Rembrandt or Rubens? A little attention will soon convince your correspondent of the utter futility or falsehood of the ordinary critiques of the press; and there could, I believe, even at present, be little doubt in her mind as to the fitting answer to the question, whether we are to take the opinion of the accomplished artist or of the common newsmonger, were it not for a misgiving which, be she conscious of it or not, is probably floating in her mind,—whether that can really be *great* Art which has no influence

* See the Preface to the second edition of 'Modern Painters' (vol. i. p. xix., etc.) Frederick Richard Lee, R.A., died in June 1879.

whatsoever on the multitude, and is appreciable only by the initiated few. And this is the real question of difficulty. It is easy to prove that such and such a critic is wrong; but not so, to prove that what everybody dislikes is right. It is fitting to pay respect to Sir Augustus Callcott, but is it so to take his word against all the world?

This inquiry requires to be followed with peculiar caution; for by setting at defiance the judgment of the public, we in some sort may appear to justify that host of petty scribblers, and contemptible painters, who in all time have used the same plea in defence of their rejected works, and have received in consequence merciless chastisement from contemporary and powerful authors or painters, whose reputation was as universal as it was just. "Mes ouvrages," said Rubens to his challenger, Abraham Janssens, "ont été exposés en Italie, et en Espagne, sans que j'aie reçu la nouvelle de leur condamnation. Vous n'avez qu'à soumettre les votres à la même épreuve."* "Je défie," says Boileau, "tous

* Abraham Janssens, in his jealousy of Rubens, proposed to him that they should each paint a picture, and submit the rival works to the decision of the public. Mr. Ruskin gives Rubens' reply, the tenor of which may be found in any life of the artist—(See Hasselt's 'Histoire de Rubens,' (Brussels 1840) p. 48, from which Mr. Ruskin quotes; Descamps, vol. i. p. 304; Walpole's 'Anecdotes of Painting,' Bohn's octavo edition, p. 306).

les amateurs les plus mécontents du public, de me citer un bon livre que le public ait jamais rebuté, à moins qu'ils ne mettent en ce rang leur écrits, de la bonté desquels eux seuls sont persuadés."

Now the fact is, that the whole difficulty of the question is caused by the ambiguity of this word—the "public." Whom does it include? People continually forget that there is a *separate* public for every picture, and for every book. Appealed to with reference to any particular work, the public is that class of persons who possess the knowledge which it presupposes, and the faculties to which it is addressed. With reference to a new edition of Newton's Principia, the "public" means little more than the Royal Society. With reference to one of Wordsworth's poems, it means all who have hearts. With reference to one of Moore's, all who have passions. With reference to the works of Hogarth, it means those who have worldly knowledge,—to the works of Giotto, those who have religious faith. Each work must be tested exclusively by the fiat of the *particular* public to whom it is addressed. We will listen to no comments on Newton from people who have no mathematical knowledge; to none on Wordsworth from those who have no hearts; to none on Giotto from those who have no religion. Therefore, when we have to form a

judgment of any new work, the question "What do the public say to it?" is indeed of vital importance; but we must always inquire, first, who are *its* public? We must not submit a treatise on moral philosophy to a conclave of horse-jockeys, nor a work of deep artistical research to the writers for the Art Union.

The public, then, we repeat, when referred to with respect to a particular work, consist only of those who have knowledge of its subject, and are possessed of the faculties to which it is addressed.

If it fail of touching *these*, the work is a bad one; but it in no degree militates against it that it is rejected by those to whom it does not appeal. To whom, then, let us ask, and to *what* public do the works of Turner appeal? To those only, we reply, who have profound and disciplined acquaintance with nature, ardent poetical feeling, and keen eye for colour (a faculty far more rare than an ear for music). They are deeply-toned poems, intended for all who love poetry, but not for those who delight in mimickries of wine-glasses and nutshells. They are deep treatises on natural phenomena, intended for all who are acquainted with such phenomena, but not for those who, like the painter Barry, are amazed at finding the realities of the Alps grander than the imaginations of Salvator, and assert that they saw the moon from the Mont Cenis four times

as big as usual, "from being so much nearer to it"! * And they are studied melodies of exquisite colour, intended for those who have perception of colour; not for those who fancy that all trees are Prussian green. Then comes the question, Were the works of Turner *ever* rejected by any person possessing even partially these qualifications? We answer boldly, never. On the contrary, they are universally hailed by *this* public with an enthusiasm not undeserving in appearance—at least to those who are debarred from sharing in it, of its usual soubriquet—the Turner mania.

Is, then, the number of those who are acquainted with the truth of nature so limited? So it has

* This is a singular instance of the profound ignorance of landscape in which great and intellectual painters of the human form may remain; an ignorance, which commonly renders their remarks on landscape painting nugatory, if not false.†

† The amazement of the painter is underrated:—"You will believe me much nearer heaven upon Mount Cenis than I was before, or shall probably be again for some time. We passed this mountain on Sunday last, and about seven in the morning were near the top of the road over it, on both sides of which the mountain rises to a very great height, yet so high were we in the valley between them that the moon, which was above the horizon of the mountains, appeared at least five times as big as usual, and much more distinctly marked than I ever saw it through some very good telescopes."—Letter to Edmund Burke, dated Turin, Sept. 24, 1766. Works of James Barry, R.A., 2 vols., quarto (London, 1809), vol. i. p. 58. He died in 1806.

been asserted by one who knew much both of Art and Nature, and both were glorious in his country.*

"ΙΠ. Οὐ μέντοι εἰώθασιν ἄνθρωποι ὀνομάζειν οὕτως.
ΣΩ. Πότερον, ὦ Ἵππια, οἱ εἰδότες ἢ οἱ μὴ εἰδότες;
ΙΠ. Οἱ πολλοί.
ΣΩ. Εἰσὶ δ' οὗτοί οἱ εἰδότες τἀληθές, οἱ πολλοί;
ΙΠ. Οὐ δῆτα."

HIPPIAS MAJOR.

Now, we are not inclined to go quite so far as this. There are many subjects with respect to which the multitude *are* cognizant of truth, or at least of *some* truth; and those subjects may be generally characterized as everything which materially concerns themselves or their interests. The public are acquainted with the nature of their own passions, and the point of their own calamities,—can laugh at the weakness they feel, and weep at the miseries

* Plato.—"*Hippias.* Men do not commonly say so.
Socrates. Who do not say so,—those who know, or those who do not know?
Hippias. The multitude.
Socrates. Are then the multitude acquainted with truth?
Hippias. Certainly not."

The answer is put into the mouth of the sophist; but put as an established fact, which he cannot possibly deny.†

† Plato: Hippias Major, 284 E. Steph.

they have experienced; but all the sagacity they possess, be it how great soever, will not enable them to judge of likeness to that which they have never seen, nor to acknowledge principles on which they have never reflected. Of a comedy or a drama, an epigram or a ballad, they are judges from whom there is no appeal; but not of the representation of facts which they have never examined, of beauties which they have never loved. It is not sufficient that the facts or the features of nature be around us, while they are not within us. We may walk day by day through grove and meadow, and scarcely know more concerning them than is known by bird and beast, that the one has shade for the head, and the other softness for the foot. It is not true that "the eye, it cannot choose but see," unless we obey the following condition, and go forth "in a wise passiveness,"* free from that plague of our own hearts which brings the shadow of ourselves, and the tumult of our petty interests and impatient passions, across the light and calm of Nature. We do not sit at the feet of our mistress to listen to her teaching; but we seek her only to drag from her that which may suit our purpose, to see in her the confirmation of a theory, or find

* Wordsworth. 'Poems of Sentiment and Reflection,' i. "Expostulation and Reply."

in her fuel for our pride. Nay, do we often go to her even thus? Have we not rather cause to take to ourselves the full weight of Wordsworth's noble appeal—

> "Vain pleasures of luxurious life!
> For ever with yourselves at strife,
> Through town and country, both deranged
> By affections interchanged,
> And all the perishable gauds
> That heaven-deserted man applauds.
> When will your hapless patrons learn
> To watch and ponder, to discern
> The freshness, the eternal youth
> Of admiration, sprung from truth,
> From beauty infinitely growing
> Upon a mind with love o'erflowing:
> To sound the depths of every art
> That seeks its wisdom through the heart?"*

When *will* they learn it? Hardly, we fear, in this age of steam and iron, luxury and selfishness. We grow more and more artificial day by day, and see less and less worthiness in those pleasures which bring with them no morbid excitement, in that knowledge which affords us no opportunity of display. Your correspondent may rest assured that those who do not *care* for nature, who do not love her, *cannot* see her. A few of her phenomena lie on the surface; the nobler number lie deep, and are the reward of watching and of thought. The

* 'Memorials of a Tour in Scotland. 1814. iii. Effusion.'

artist may choose *which* he will render: no human atr can render both. If he paint the surface, he will catch the crowd; if he paint the depth, he will be admired only—but with how deep and fervent admiration, none but they who feel it can tell—by the thoughtful and observant few.

There are some admirable observations on this subject in your December number ("An Evening's Gossip with a Painter"*); but there is one circumstance with respect to the works of Turner which yet further limits the number of their admirers. They are not prosaic statements of the phenomena of nature,—they are statements of them under the influence of ardent feeling; they are, in a word, the most fervent and real poetry which the English nation is at present producing. Now, not only is this proverbially an age in which poetry is little cared for; but even with those who have most love of it, and most need of it, it requires, especially if high and philosophical, an attuned, quiet, and exalted frame of mind for its enjoyment; and if

* See the *Artist and Amateur's Magazine*, p. 248. The article named was written in dialogue, and in the passage alluded to 'Palette,' an artist, points out to his companion 'Chatworthy,' who represents the general public, that 'next to the highest authorities in Art are the pure, natural, untainted, highly educated, and intelligent *few*.' The argument is continued over some pages, but although the *Magazine* is not now readily accessible to the ordinary reader, it will not be thought necessary to go further into the discussion.

dragged into the midst of the noisy interests of every-day life, may easily be made ridiculous or offensive. Wordsworth recited, by Mr. Wakley, in the House of Commons, in the middle of a financial debate, would sound, in all probability, very like Mr. Wakley's * own verses. Wordsworth, read in the stillness of a mountain hollow, has the force of the mountain waters. What would be the effect of a passage of Milton recited in the middle of a pantomime, or of a dreamy stanza of Shelley upon the Stock Exchange? Are we to judge of the nightingale by hearing it sing in broad daylight in Cheapside? For just such a judgment do we form of Turner by standing before his pictures in the Royal Academy. It is a strange thing that the public never seem to suspect that there may be a poetry in painting, to meet which, some preparation of sympathy, some harmony of circumstance, is required; and that it is just as impossible to see half a dozen great pictures as to read half a dozen great poems at the same time, if their tendencies or their tones of feeling be contrary or discordant.

* Mr. Thomas Wakley, at this time M.P. for Finsbury, and coroner for Middlesex. He was the founder of the *Lancet*, and took a deep interest in medicine, which he at one time practised. I do not find, however, that he published any volume of poems, though he may well have been the author, as the letter seems to imply, of some occasional verses. He died in 1862.

Let us imagine what would be the effect on the mind of any man of feeling, to whom an eager friend, desirous of impressing upon him the merit of different poets, should read successively, and without a pause, the following passages, in which lie something of the prevailing character of the works of six of our greatest modern artists:—

LANDSEER.

"His hair, his size, his mouth, his lugs,
Show'd he was nane o' Scotland's dougs,
But whalpit some place far abroad
Whar sailors gang to fish for cod."*

MARTIN.

"Far in the horizon to the north appear'd,
From skirt to skirt, a fiery region, stretched
In battailous aspéct, and nearer view
Bristled with upright beams innumerable
Of rigid spears, and helmets throng'd, and shields
Various, with boastful argument portray'd."

WILKIE.

"The risin' moon began to glowr
The distant Cumnock hills out owre;
To count her horns, wi' a' my pow'r,
I set mysel';
But whether she had three or fowr,
I couldna tell."

* The references to this and the five passages following are (1) Burns, 'The Twa Dogs'; (2) Milton, 'Paradise Lost,' vi. 79; (3) Burns, 'Death and Doctor Hornbook'; (4) Byron, 'Hebrew Melodies,' "Oh! snatched away in beauty's bloom"; (5) Campbell; and (6) Shelley, 'Prometheus Unbound,' Act ii. sc. 1.

EASTLAKE.

"And thou, who tell'st me to forget,
Thy looks are wan, thine eyes are wet."

STANFIELD.

"Ye mariners of England,
Who guard our native seas,
Whose flag has braved a thousand years
The battle and the breeze."

TURNER.

"The point of one white star is quivering still,
Deep in the orange light of widening dawn,
Beyond the purple mountains. Through a chasm
Of wind-divided mist the darker lake
Reflects it, now it fades: it gleams again,
As the waves fall, and as the burning threads
Of woven cloud unravel in pale air,
'Tis lost! and through yon peaks of cloudlike snow
The roseate sunlight quivers."

Precisely to such advantage as the above passages, so placed,* appear, are the works of any painter of mind seen in the Academy. None suffer more than Turner's, which are not only interfered with by the prosaic pictures around

* It will be felt at once that the more serious and higher passages generally suffer most. But Stanfield, little as it may be thought, suffers grievously in the Academy, just as the fine passage from Campbell is ruined by its position between the perfect tenderness of Byron and Shelley. The more vulgar a picture is, the better it bears the Academy.

them, but neutralize each other. Two works of his, side by side, destroy each other to a dead certainty, for each is so vast, so complete, so demandant of every power, so sufficient for every desire of the mind, that it is utterly impossible for two to be comprehended together. Each must have the undivided intellect, and each is destroyed by the attraction of the other; and it is the chief power and might of these pictures, that they are works for the closet and the heart—works to be dwelt upon separately and devotedly, and then chiefly when the mind is in its highest tone, and desirous of a beauty which may be food for its immortality. It is the very stamp and essence of the purest poetry, that it can only be so met and understood; and that the clash of common interests, and the roar of the selfish world, must be hushed about the heart, before it can hear the still, small voice, wherein rests the power communicated from the Holiest.*

* "Although it is in verse that the most consummate skill in composition is to be looked for, and all the artifices of language displayed, yet it is in verse only that we throw off the yoke of the world, and are, as it were, privileged to utter our deepest and holiest feelings. Poetry in this respect may be called the salt of the earth. We express in it, and receive in it, sentiments for which, were it not for this permitted medium, the usages of the

Can, then,—will be, if I mistake not, the final inquiry of your correspondent,—can, then, we ordinary mortals,—can I, who am not Sir Augustus Callcott, nor Sir Francis Chantrey, ever derive any pleasure from works of this lofty character? Heaven forbid, we reply, that it should be otherwise. *Nothing* more is necessary for the appreciation of them, than that which is necessary for the appreciation of any great writer,—the quiet study of him with an humble heart. There are, indeed, technical qualities, difficulties overcome, and principles developed, which are reserved for the enjoyment of the artist; but these do not add to the influence of the picture. On the contrary, we must break through its charm, before we can comprehend its means, and "murder to dissect." The picture is intended, not for artists alone, but for all who love what it portrays; and so little doubt have we of the capacity of all to understand the works in question, that we have the most confident expectation, within the next

world would neither allow utterance nor acceptance."—*Southey's Colloquies.** Such allowance is never made to the painter. In him, inspiration is called insanity,—in him, the sacred fire, possession.

* 'Sir Thomas More; or, Colloquies on the Progress and Prospects of Society.' Colloquy xiv. (vol. ii. p. 399, in Murray's edition, 1829).

fifty years, of seeing the name of Turner placed on the same impregnable height with that of Shakspeare.* Both have committed errors of taste and judgment. In both it is, or will be, heresy even to feel those errors, so entirely are they over-balanced by the gigantic powers of whose impetuosity they are the result. So soon as the public are convinced, by the maintained testimony of high authority, that Turner is worth understanding, they will try to understand him; and if they try, they can. Nor are they, now, as is commonly thought, despised or defied by him. He has too much respect for them to endeavour to please them by falsehood. He will not win for himself a hearing by the betrayal of his message.

* "This Turner, of whom you have known so little while he was living among you, will one day take his place beside Shakspeare and Verulam, in the annals of the light of England.

"Yes: beside Shakspeare and Verulam, a third star in that central constellation, round which, in the astronomy of intellect, all other stars make their circuit. By Shakspeare, humanity was unsealed to you; by Verulam the *principles* of nature; and by Turner, her *aspect*. All these were sent to unlock one of the gates of light, and to unlock it for the first time. But of all the three, though not the greatest, Turner was the most unprecedented in his work. Bacon did what Aristotle had attempted; Shakspeare did perfectly what Æschylus did partially; but none before Turner had lifted the veil from the face of nature; the majesty of the hills and forests had received no interpretation, and the clouds passed unrecorded from the face of the heavens which they adorned, and of the earth to which they ministered."—('Lectures on Architecture and Painting,' by John Ruskin; published 1854; pp. 180-81.)

Finally, then, we would recommend your correspondent, first, to divest herself of every atom of lingering respect or regard for the common criticism of the press, and to hold fast by the authority of Callcott, Chantrey, Landseer, and Stanfield; and this, not because we would have her *slavishly* subject to any authority but that of her own eyes and reason, but because we would not have her blown about with every wind of doctrine, before she has convinced her reason, or learned to use her eyes. And if she can draw at all, let her make careful studies of any natural objects that may happen to come in her way,—sticks, leaves, or stones,—and of distant atmospheric effects on groups of objects; not for the sake of the drawing itself, but for the sake of the powers of attention and accurate observation which thus only can be cultivated. And let her make the study, not thinking of this artist or of that; not conjecturing what Harding would have done, or Stanfield, or Callcott, with her subject; not trying to draw in a bold style, or a free style, or any other style; but drawing *all* she *sees*, as far as may be in her power, earnestly, faithfully, unselectingly; and, which is perhaps the more difficult task of the two, *not* drawing what she does *not* see. Oh, if people did but know how

many lines nature *suggests* without *showing*, what different art should we have! And let her never be discouraged by ill success. She will seldom have gained more knowledge than when she most feels her failure. Let her use every opportunity of examining the works of Turner; let her try to copy them, then try to copy some one else's, and observe which presents most of that kind of difficulty which she found in copying nature. Let her, if possible, extend her acquaintance with wild natural scenery of every kind and character, endeavouring in each species of scenery to distinguish those features which are expressive and harmonious from those which are unaffecting or incongruous; and after a year or two of such discipline as this, let her judge for herself. No authority need then, or can then, be very influential with her. Her own pleasure in works of true greatness * will be too real, too instinctive, to be persuaded, or laughed out of her. We

* We have not sufficiently expressed our concurrence in the opinion of her friend, that Turner's modern works are his greatest. His early ones are nothing but amplifications of what others have done, or hard studies of every-day truth. His later works, no one but himself could have conceived: they are the result of the most exalted imagination, acting with the knowledge acquired by *means* of his former works.

bid her, therefore, heartily good-speed, with this final warning:—Let her beware, in going to nature, of taking with her the commonplace dogmas or dicta of Art. Let her not look for what is like Titian, or like Claude, for composed form, or arranged chiaroscuro; but believe that everything which God has made is beautiful, and that everything which nature teaches is true. Let her beware, above everything, of that wicked pride which makes man think he can dignify God's glorious creations, or exalt the majesty of his universe. Let her be humble, we repeat, and earnest. Truth was never sealed, if so sought. And once more we bid her good-speed in the words of our poet-moralist:—

> "Enough of Science and of Art:
> Seal up these barren leaves;
> Come forth, and bring with you a heart
> That watches, and receives."*

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient humble servant,

THE AUTHOR OF 'MODERN PAINTERS.'

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* Wordsworth. 'Poems of Sentiment and Reflection.' ii. "The Tables Turned" (1798), being the companion poem to that quoted *ante*, p. 25. The second line should read, "Close up these barren leaves."

From 'Some Account of the Origin and Objects of the New Oxford Examinations for the Title of Associate in Arts and Certificates,' by T. D. Acland, late Fellow of All Souls' College, Oxford,* 1858, pp. 54—60.

THE ARTS AS A BRANCH OF EDUCATION.

PENRITH, *Sept.* 25, 1857.

My dear Sir,—I have just received your most interesting letter, and will try to answer as shortly as I can, saying nothing of what I feel, and what you must well know I should feel, respecting the difficulty of the questions and their importance; except only this, that I should not have had the boldness to answer your letter by return of post, unless, in consequence of conversations on this subject with Mr. Acland and Dr. Acland, two

* This work related to University co-operation with schemes for middle-class education, and included letters from various authorities, amongst others one from Mr. Hullah on Music. The present letter was addressed to the Rev. F. Temple, (now Bishop of Exeter,) and was written in reply to a statement of certain points in debate between him and Mr. (now Sir Thomas) Acland. In forwarding it to his opponent, Mr. Temple wrote as follows:—"The liberal arts are supreme over their sciences. Instead of the rules being despotic, the great artist usually proves his greatness by rightly setting aside rules; and the great critic is he who, while he knows the rule, can appreciate the 'law within the law' which overrides the rule. In no other way does Ruskin so fully show his greatness in criticism as in that fine inconsistency for which he has been so often attacked by men who do not see the real consistency that lies beneath."

months ago, I had been lately thinking of it more than of any other.*

Your questions fall under two heads: (1) The range which an art examination can take. (2) The connection in which it should be placed with other examinations.

I think the art examination should have three objects:

(1) To put the happiness and knowledge which the study of art conveys within the conception of the youth, so that he may in after-life pursue them, if he has the gift.

(2) To enforce, as far as possible, such knowledge of art among those who are likely to become its patrons, or the guardians of its works, as may enable them usefully to fulfil those duties.

(3) To distinguish pre-eminent gift for the production of works of art, so as to get hold of all the good artistical faculty born in the country, and leave no Giotto lost among hill-shepherds.†

* In the following year Mr. Ruskin wrote a paper for the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, on 'Education in Art,' (Transactions, 1858, pp. 311—316,) now reprinted in the eleventh volume of Mr. Ruskin's Works, 'A Joy for Ever,' p. 185. To this paper the reader of the present letter is referred.

† "Giotto passed the first ten years of his life, a shepherd-boy, among these hills (of Fiésole); was found by Cimabue, near his native village, drawing one of his sheep upon a smooth stone; was yielded up by his father, 'a simple person, a labourer of the earth,' to the guardianship

In order to accomplish the first object, I think that, according to Mr. Acland's proposal, preliminary knowledge of drawing and music should be asked for, in connexion with writing and arithmetic; but not, in the preliminary examination, made to count towards distinction in other schools. I think drawing is a necessary means of the expression of certain facts of form, and means of acquaintance with them, as arithmetic is the means of acquaintance with facts of number. I think the facts which an elementary knowledge of drawing enables a man to observe and note are often of as much importance to him as those which he can describe in words or calculate in numbers. And I think the cases in which mental deficiency would prevent the acquirement of a serviceable power of drawing would be found as rare as those in which no progress could be made in arithmetic. I would not desire this elementary knowledge to extend far, but the limits which I would propose are not here in question. While I feel the force of all the admirable observations of Mr. Hullah on the use of the study of music, I imagine that the cases of physical incapacity of distinguishing sounds would

of the painter, who, by his own work, had already made the streets of Florence ring with joy; attended him to Florence, and became his disciple."—('Giotto and his Works in Padua,' by John Ruskin, 1854, p. 12.)

be too frequent to admit of musical knowledge being made a *requirement;* I would *ask* for it, in Mr. Acland's sense; but the drawing might, I think, be required, as arithmetic would be.

2. To accomplish the second object is the main difficulty. Touching which I venture positively to state—

First. That sound criticism of art is impossible to young men, for it consists principally, and in a far more exclusive sense than has yet been felt, in the recognition of the facts represented by the art. A great artist represents many and abstruse facts; it is necessary, in order to judge of his works, that all those facts should be experimentally (not by hearsay) known to the observer; whose recognition of them constitutes his approving judgment. A young man *cannot* know them.

Criticism of art by young men must, therefore, consist either in the more or less apt retailing and application of received opinions, or in a more or less immediate and dexterous use of the knowledge they already possess, so as to be able to assert of given works of art that they are true up to a certain point; the probability being then that they are true farther than the young man sees.

The first kind of criticism is, in general, useless, if not harmful; the second is that which the youths

will employ who are capable of becoming critics in after years.

Secondly. All criticism of art, at whatever period of life, must be partial; warped more or less by the feelings of the person endeavouring to judge. Certain merits of art (as energy, for instance) are pleasant only to certain temperaments; and certain tendencies of art (as, for instance, to religious sentiment) can only be sympathized with by one order of minds. It is almost impossible to conceive of any mode of examination which would set the students on anything like equitable footing in such respects; but their sensibility to art may be generally tested.

Thirdly. The history of art, or the study, in your accurate words, "*about* the subject," is in no wise directly connected with the studies which promote or detect art-capacity or art-judgment. It is quite possible to acquire the most extensive and useful knowledge of the forms of art existing in different ages, and among different nations, without thereby acquiring any power whatsoever of determining respecting any of them (much less respecting a modern work of art) whether it is good or bad.

These three facts being so, we had perhaps best consider, first, what direction the art studies of the youth should take, as that will at once regulate the mode of examination.

First. He should be encouraged to carry forward the practical power of drawing he has acquired in the elementary school. This should be done chiefly by using that power as a help in other work: precision of touch should be cultivated by map-drawing in his geography class; taste in form by flower-drawing in the botanical schools; and bone and limb drawing in the physiological schools. His art, kept thus to practical service, will always be right as far as it goes; there will be no affectation or shallowness in it. The work of the drawing-master would be at first little more than the exhibition of the best means and enforcement of the most perfect results in the collateral studies of form.

Secondly. His critical power should be developed by the presence around him of the best models, *into the excellence of which his knowledge permits him to enter.* He should be encouraged, above all things, to form and express judgment of his own; not as if his judgment were of any importance as related to the excellence of the thing, but that both his master and he may know precisely in what state his mind is. He should be told of an Albert Durer engraving, "That *is* good, whether you like it or not; but be sure to determine *whether* you do or do not, and why." All formal expressions of reasons for opinion, such as a boy

could catch up and repeat, should be withheld like poison; and all models which are too good for him should be kept out of his way. Contemplation of works of art without understanding them jades the faculties and enslaves the intelligence. A Rembrandt etching is a better example to a boy than a finished Titian, and a cast from a leaf than one of the Elgin marbles.

Thirdly. I would no more involve the art-schools in the study of the history of art than surgical schools in that of the history of surgery. But a general idea of the influence of art on the human mind ought to be given by the study of history in the historical schools; the effect of a picture, and power of a painter, being examined just as carefully (in relation to its extent) as the effect of a battle and the power of a general. History, in its full sense, involves subordinate knowledge of all that influences the acts of mankind; it has hardly yet been written at all, owing to the want of such subordinate knowledge in the historians; it has been confined either to the relation of events by eye-witnesses, (the only valuable form of it,) or the more or less ingenious collation of such relations. And it is especially desirable to give history a more archæological range at this period, so that the class of manufactures produced by a

city at a given date should be made of more importance in the student's mind than the humours of the factions that governed, or details of the accidents that preserved it, because every day renders the destruction of historical memorials more complete in Europe owing to the total want of interest in them felt by its upper and middle classes.

Fourthly. Where the faculty for art was special, it ought to be carried forward to the study of design, first in practical application to manufacture, then in higher branches of composition. The general principles of the application of art to manufacture should be explained in all cases, whether of special or limited faculty. Under this head we may at once get rid of the third question stated in the first page—how to detect special gift. The power of drawing from a given form accurately would not be enough to prove this: the additional power of design, with that of eye for colour, which could be tested in the class concerned with manufacture, would justify the master in advising and encouraging the youth to undertake special pursuit of art as an object of life.

It seems easy, on the supposition of such a course of study, to conceive a mode of examination which would test relative excellence. I cannot suggest the kind of questions which ought to be put to the class occupied with sculpture; but in

my own business of painting, I should put, in general, such tasks and questions as these :—

(1) "Sketch such and such an object" (given a difficult one, as a bird, complicated piece of drapery, or foliage) "as completely as you can in light and shade in half an hour."

(2) "Finish such and such a portion of it" (given a very small portion) "as perfectly as you can, irrespective of time."

(3) "Sketch it in colour in half an hour.

(4) "Design an ornament for a given place and purpose."

(5) "Sketch a picture of a given historical event in pen and ink."

(6) "Sketch it in colours."

(7) "Name the picture you were most interested in in the Royal Academy Exhibition of this year. State in writing what you suppose to be its principal merits—faults—the reasons of the *interest* you took in it."

I think it is only the fourth of these questions which would admit of much change; and the seventh, in the name of the exhibition; the question being asked, without previous knowledge by the students, respecting some *one* of four or five given exhibitions which should be visited before the Examination.

This being my general notion of what an Art-Examination should be, the second great question remains of the division of schools and connexion of studies.

Now I have not yet considered—I have not, indeed, knowledge enough to enable me to consider—what the practical convenience or results of given arrangements would be. But the logical and harmonious arrangement is surely a simple one; and it seems to me as if it would not be inconvenient, namely, (requiring elementary drawing with arithmetic in the preliminary Examination,) that there should then be three advanced schools :—

A. The School of Literature (occupied chiefly in the study of human emotion and history).

B. The School of Science (occupied chiefly in the study of external facts and existences of constant kind).

C. The School of Art (occupied in the development of active and productive human faculties).

In the school A, I would include Composition in all languages, Poetry, History, Archæology, Ethics.

In the school B, Mathematics, Political Economy, the Physical Sciences (including Geography and Medicine).

In the school C, Painting, Sculpture, including Architecture, Agriculture, Manufacture, War, Music, Bodily Exercises, (Navigation in seaport schools,) including laws of health.

I should require, for a first class, proficiency in two schools; not, of course, in all the subjects of each chosen school, but in a well-chosen and combined group of them. Thus, I should call a very good first-class man one who had got some such range of subjects, and such proficiency in each, as this :—

English, Greek, and Mediæval-Italian Literature.	High.
English and French History, and Archæology.	Average.
Conic Sections.	Thorough, as far as learnt.
Political Economy.	Thorough, as far as learnt.
Botany, *or* Chemistry, *or* Physiology.	High.
Painting.	Average.
Music.	Average.
Bodily Exercises.	High.

I have written you a sadly long letter, but I could not manage to get it shorter.

Believe me, my dear Sir,
Very faithfully and respectfully yours,
J. RUSKIN.

REV. F. TEMPLE.

Perhaps I had better add what to you, but not to every one who considers such a scheme of education, would be palpable,—that the main value of it would be brought out by judicious involution of its studies. This, for instance, would be the kind of Examination Paper I should hope for in the Botanical Class:—

1. State the habit of such and such a plant.

2. Sketch its leaf, and a portion of its ramifications (memory).

3. Explain the mathematical laws of its growth and structure.

4. Give the composition of its juices in different seasons.

5. Its uses? Its relations to other families of plants, and conceivable uses beyond those known?

6. Its commercial value in London? Mode of cultivation?

7. Its mythological meaning? The commonest or most beautiful fables respecting it?

8. Quote any important references to it by great poets.

9. Time of its introduction.

10. Describe its consequent influence on civilization.

Of all these ten questions, there is not one which does not test the student in other studies

than botany. Thus, 1, Geography; 2, Drawing; 3, Mathematics; 4, 5, Chemistry; 6, Political Economy; 7, 8, 9, 10, Literature.

Of course the plants required to be thus studied could be but few, and would rationally be chosen from the most useful of foreign plants, and those common and indigenous in England. All sciences should, I think, be taught more for the sake of their facts, and less for that of their system, than heretofore. Comprehensive and connected views are impossible to most men; the systems they learn are nothing but skeletons to them; but nearly all men can understand the relations of a few facts bearing on daily business, and to be exemplified in common substances. And science will soon be so vast that the most comprehensive men will still be narrow, and we shall see the fitness of rather teaching our youth to concentrate their general intelligence highly on given points than scatter it towards an infinite horizon from which they can fetch nothing, and to which they can carry nothing.

From 'Nature and Art,' December 1, 1866.

ART-TEACHING BY CORRESPONDENCE.

Dear Mr. Williams,*—I like your plan of teaching by letter exceedingly: and not only so, but have myself adopted it largely, with the help of an intelligent under-master, whose operations, however, so far from interfering with, you will much facilitate, if you can bring this literary way of teaching into more accepted practice. I wish we had more drawing-masters who were able to give instruction definite enough to be expressed in writing: many can teach nothing but a few tricks of the brush, and have nothing to write, because nothing to tell.

With every wish for your success,—a wish which I make quite as much in your pupils' interest as in your own,—

Believe me, always faithfully yours,

J. RUSKIN.

DENMARK HILL, *November* 1860.

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* This letter was, it appears, originally addressed to an artist, Mr. Williams (of Southampton), and was then printed, some years later, in the number of *Nature and Art* above referred to.

LETTERS ON ART.

II.

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS AND THE NATIONAL GALLERY.

DANGER TO THE NATIONAL GALLERY. 1847.
THE NATIONAL GALLERY. 1852.
THE BRITISH MUSEUM. 1866.
ON THE PURCHASE OF PICTURES. 1880.

II.

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS AND THE NATIONAL GALLERY.

From 'The Times,' January 7, 1847.

DANGER TO THE NATIONAL GALLERY.*

To the Editor of 'The Times.'

Sir,—As I am sincerely desirous that a stop may be put to the dangerous process of cleaning lately begun in our National Gallery, and as I believe that what is right is most effectively when most kindly advocated, and what is true most convincingly when least passionately asserted, I was grieved to see the violent attack upon Mr. Eastlake

* Some words are necessary to explain this and the following letter. In the autumn of 1846 a correspondence was opened in the columns of *The Times* on the subject of the cleaning and restoration of the national pictures during the previous vacation. Mr. (afterwards Sir Charles) Eastlake was at this time Keeper of the Gallery, though he resigned office soon after this letter was written, partly in consequence of the attacks which had been made upon him. He was blamed, not only for restoring good pictures, but also for buying bad ones, and in particular the purchase of a 'libel on Holbein' was quoted against him. The attack was led by the picture-dealer, and at one time artist,

in your columns of Friday last; yet not less surprised at the attempted defence which appeared in them yesterday.* The outcry which has arisen upon this subject has been just, but it has been too loud; the injury done is neither so great nor so wilful as has been asserted, and I fear that the respect which might have been paid to remonstrance may be refused to clamour.

I was inclined at first to join as loudly as any in the hue and cry. Accustomed, as I have been, to look to England as the refuge of the pictorial as of all other distress, and to hope that, having no high art of her own, she would at least protect what she could not produce, and respect what she could not restore, I could not but look upon the attack which has been made upon the pictures in question as on the violation of a sanctuary. I had seen in Venice the noblest works of Veronese

Mr. Morris Moore, writing at first under the pseudonym of 'Verax,' and afterwards in his own name. He continued his opposition through several years, especially during 1850 and 1852. He also published some pamphlets on the subject, amongst them one entitled 'The Revival of Vandalism at the National Gallery, a reply to John Ruskin and others' (London, Ollivier, 1853). The whole discussion may be gathered in all its details from the Parliamentary Report of the Select Committee on the National Gallery in 1853.

* The "violent attack" alludes to a letter of 'Verax' in *The Times* of Thursday (not Friday), December 31, 1846, and the "attempted defence" to another letter signed "A. G." in *The Times* of January 4, two days (not *the* day) before Mr. Ruskin wrote the present letter.

painted over with flake-white with a brush fit for tarring ships; I had seen in Florence Angelico's highest inspiration rotted and seared into fragments of old wood, burnt into blisters, or blotted into glutinous maps of mildew;* I had seen in Paris Raphael restored by David and Vernet; and I returned to England in the one last trust that, though her National Gallery was an European jest, her art a shadow, and her connoisseurship an hypocrisy, though she neither knew how to cherish nor how to choose, and lay exposed to the cheats of every vendor of old canvass,—yet that such good pictures as through chance or oversight might find their way beneath that preposterous portico, and into those melancholy and miserable rooms, were at least to be vindicated thenceforward from the mercy of republican, priest, or painter, safe alike from musketry, monkery, and manipulation.

But whatever pain I may feel at the dissipation of this dream, I am not disposed altogether to deny the necessity of some illuminatory process with respect to pictures exposed to a London atmosphere and populace. Dust an inch thick, accumulated upon the panes in the course of the day, and dark-

* 'The Crucifixion, or Adoration of the Cross,' in the church of San Marco. An engraving of this picture may be found in Mrs. Jameson's 'History of our Lord,' vol. i. p. 189.

ness closing over the canvass like a curtain, attest too forcibly the influence on floor and air of the "mutable, rank-scented, many." It is of little use to be over-anxious for the preservation of pictures which we cannot see; the only question is, whether in the present instance the process may not have been carried perilously far, and whether in future simpler and safer means may not be adopted to remove the coat of dust and smoke, without affecting either the glazing of the picture, or, what is almost as precious, the mellow tone left by time.

As regards the "Peace and War,"* I have no hesitation in asserting that for the present it is utterly and for ever partially destroyed. I am not disposed lightly to impugn the judgment of Mr. Eastlake, but this was indisputably of all the pictures in the Gallery that which least required, and least could endure, the process of cleaning. It was in the most advantageous condition under which a work of Rubens can be seen; mellowed by time into more perfect harmony than when it left the easel, enriched and warmed, without losing any of its freshness or energy. The execution of the master is always so bold and frank as to be completely, perhaps even most agreeably, seen

* No. 46 in the National Gallery.

under circumstances of obscurity, which would be injurious to pictures of greater refinement; and, though this was, indeed, one of his most highly finished and careful works, (to my mind, before it suffered this recent injury, far superior to everything at Antwerp, Malines, or Cologne,) this was a more weighty reason for caution than for interference. Some portions of colour have been exhibited which were formerly untraceable; but even these have lost in power what they have gained in definiteness,—the majesty and preciousness of all the tones are departed, the balance of distances lost. Time may perhaps restore something of the glow, but never the subordination; and the more delicate portions of flesh tint, especially the back of the female figure on the left, and of the boy in the centre, are destroyed for ever.

The large Cuyp * is, I think, nearly uninjured. Many portions of the foreground painting have been revealed, which were before only to be traced painfully, if at all. The distance has indeed lost the appearance of sunny haze, which was its chief charm, but this I have little doubt it originally did not possess, and in process of time may recover.

* 'Landscape, with Cattle and Figures—Evening' (No. 53). Since the bequest of the somewhat higher "large Dort" in 1876 (No. 961), it has ceased to be "the large Cuyp."

The "Bacchus and Ariadne"* of Titian has escaped so scot free that, not knowing it had been cleaned, I passed it without noticing any change. I observed only that the blue of the distance was more intense than I had previously thought it, though, four years ago, I said of that distance that it was "difficult to imagine anything more magnificently impossible, not from its vividness, but because it is *not faint and aerial enough* to account for its purity of colour. There is so total a want of atmosphere in it, that but for the difference of form it would be impossible to distinguish the mountains from the robe of Ariadne."†

Your correspondent is alike unacquainted with the previous condition of this picture, and with the character of Titian distances in general, when he complains of a loss of aerial quality resulting in the present case from cleaning.

I unfortunately did not see the new Velasquez‡ until it had undergone its discipline; but I have seldom met with an example of the master which gave me more delight, or which I believed to be

† 'Modern Painters,' vol. i. p. 146.

* No. 35 in the National Gallery. This and the two pictures already mentioned were the typical instances of "spoilt pictures," quoted by 'Verax.'

‡ 'Philip IV. of Spain, hunting the Wild Boar' (No. 197), purchased in 1846.

in more genuine or perfect condition. I saw no traces of the retouching which is hinted at by your correspondent "Verax," nor are the touches on that canvass such as to admit of very easy or untraceable interpolation of meaner handling. His complaint of loss of substance in the figures of the foreground is, I have no doubt, altogether groundless. He has seen little southern scenery if he supposes that the brilliancy and apparent nearness of the silver clouds is in the slightest degree overcharged; and shows little appreciation of Velasquez in supposing him to have sacrificed the solemnity and might of such a distance to the inferior interest of the figures in the foreground. Had he studied the picture attentively, he might have observed that the position of the horizon suggests, and the *lateral* extent of the foreground *proves*, such a distance between the spectator and even its nearest figures as may well justify the slightness of their execution.

Even granting that some of the upper glazings of the figures had been removed, the tone of the whole picture is so light, gray, and glittering, and the dependence on the power of its whites so absolute, that I think the process hardly to be regretted which has left these in lustre so precious, and restored to a brilliancy which a comparison with any modern work of similar aim would render

apparently supernatural, the sparkling motion of its figures and the serene snow of its sky.

I believe I have stated to its fullest extent all the harm that has yet been done, yet I earnestly protest against any continuance of the treatment to which these pictures have been subjected. It is useless to allege that nothing but discoloured varnish has been withdrawn, for it is perfectly possible to alter the structure and continuity, and so destroy the aerial relations of colours of which no part has been removed. I have seen the dark blue of a water-colour drawing made opaque and pale merely by mounting it; and even supposing no other injury were done, every time a picture is cleaned it loses, like a restored building, part of its authority; and is thenceforward liable to dispute and suspicion, every one of its beauties open to question, while its faults are screened from accusation. It cannot be any more reasoned from with security; for, though allowance may be made for the effect of time, no one can calculate the arbitrary and accidental changes occasioned by violent cleaning. None of the varnishes should be attacked; whatever the medium used, nothing but soot and dust should be taken away, and that chiefly by delicate and patient friction; and, in order to protract as long as possible the necessity even for this

all the important pictures in the gallery should at once be put under glass,* and closed, not merely by hinged doors, like the Correggio, but permanently and securely. I should be glad to see this done in all rich galleries, but it is peculiarly necessary in the case of pictures exposed in London, and to a crowd freely admitted four days in the week; it would do good also by necessitating the enlargement of the rooms, and the bringing down of all the pictures to the level of the eye. Every picture that is worth buying or retaining is worth exhibiting in its proper place, and if its scale be large, and its handling rough, there is the more instruction to be gained by close study of the various means adopted by the master to secure his distant effect. We can certainly spare both the ground and the funds which would enable us to exhibit pictures for which no price is thought too large, and for all purposes of study and for most of enjoyment pictures are useless when they are even a little above the

* On this and other collateral subjects the reader is referred to the next letter; to Mr. Ruskin's evidence before the National Gallery Commission in 1857; and to the Appendix to his Notes on the Turner Gallery at Marlborough House, 1856-7. It is hardly necessary to state that a very large number of the national pictures, especially the Turners, are now preserved under glass. Of the other strictures here pronounced, some are no longer deserved; and it may well be remembered that at the time this letter was written the National Gallery had been founded less than five-and-twenty years.

line. The fatigue complained of by most persons in examining a picture gallery is attributable, not only to the number of works, but to their confused order of succession, and to the straining of the sight in endeavouring to penetrate the details of those above the eye. Every gallery should be long enough to admit of its whole collection being hung in one line, side by side, and wide enough to allow of the spectators retiring to the distance at which the largest picture was intended to be seen. The works of every master should be brought together and arranged in chronological order; and such drawings or engravings as may exist in the collection, either of, or for, its pictures, or in any way illustrative of them, should be placed in frames opposite each, in the middle of the room.

But, Sir, the subjects of regret connected with the present management of our national collection are not to be limited either to its treatment or its arrangement. The principles of selection which have been acted upon in the course of the last five or six years have been as extraordinary as unjustifiable. Whatever may be the intrinsic power, interest, or artistical ability of the earlier essays of any school of art, it cannot be disputed that characteristic examples of every one of its most important phases should form part of a national collection:

granting them of little value individually, their collective teaching is of irrefragable authority; and the exhibition of perfected results alone, while the course of national progress through which these were reached is altogether concealed, is more likely to discourage than to assist the efforts of an undeveloped school. Granting even what the shallowest materialism of modern artists would assume, that the works of Perugino were of no value but as they taught Raphael—that John Bellini is altogether absorbed and overmastered by Titian—that Nino Pisano was utterly superseded by Bandinelli or Cellini, and Ghirlandajo sunk in the shadow of Buonaroti—granting Van Eyck to be a mere mechanist, and Giotto a mere child, and Angelico a superstitious monk, and whatever you choose to grant that ever blindness deemed or insolence affirmed, still it is to be maintained and proved, that if we wish to have a Buonaroti or a Titian of our own, we shall with more wisdom learn of those of whom Buonaroti and Titian learned, and at whose knees they were brought up, and whom to their day of death they ever revered and worshipped, than of those wretched pupils and partisans who sank every high function of art into a form and a faction, betrayed her trusts, darkened her traditions, overthrew her throne, and left us where we now are, stumbling

among its fragments. Sir, if the canvasses of Guido, lately introduced into the gallery,* had been works of the best of those pupils, which they are not,—if they had been good works of even that bad master, which they are not,—if they had been genuine and untouched works, even though feeble, which they are not,—if, though false and retouched remnants of a feeble and fallen school, they had been endurably decent or elementarily instructive, some conceivable excuse might perhaps have been by ingenuity forged, and by impudence uttered, for their introduction into a gallery where we previously possessed two good Guidos,† and no Perugino (for the attribution to him of the wretched panel which now bears his name is a mere insult), no Angelico,

* 'Lot and his Daughters leaving Sodom' (No. 193), bequeathed to the gallery in 1844; and 'Susannah and the Elders' (No. 196), purchased in the same year.

† The "two good Guidos" previously possessed are the 'St. Jerome' (No. 11) and the 'Magdalen' (No. 177). The "wretched panel" is No. 181, 'The Virgin and Infant Christ with St. John.' For the rest, the gallery now includes two other Peruginos, 'The Virgin adoring the Infant Christ, the Archangel Michael, the Archangel Raphael and Tobias' (No. 288), three panels, purchased in 1856, and the very recent (1879) purchase of the 'Virgin and Child with St. Jerome and St. Francis' (No. 1075). It boasts also two Angelicos, 'The Adoration of the Magi' (No. 582), and 'Christ amid the Blessed' (No. 663), purchased in 1857 and 1860;—one Albertinelli, 'Virgin and Child' (No. 645), also purchased in 1860;—and two Lorenzo di Credis, both of the 'Virgin and Child' (Nos. 593 and 648), purchased in 1857 and 1865. But it still possesses no Fra Bartolomeo, no Ghirlandajo, and no Verrochio.

no Fra Bartolomeo, no Albertinelli, no Ghirlandajo, no Verrochio, no Lorenzo di Credi—(what shall I more say, for the time would fail me?)—but now, sir, what vestige of apology remains for the cumbering our walls with pictures that have no single virtue, no colour, no drawing, no character, no history, no thought? Yet 2,000 guineas were, I believe, given for one of those encumbrances, and 5,000 for the coarse and unnecessary Rubens,* added to a room half filled with Rubens before, while a mighty and perfect work of Angelico was sold from Cardinal Fesch's collection for 1,500.† I do not speak of the spurious Holbein,‡ for though the veriest tyro might well be ashamed of such a purchase, it would have been a judicious addition had it been genuine; so was the John Bellini, so was the Van Eyck; but the mighty Venetian master,

* 'The Judgment of Paris' (No. 194), purchased from Mr. Penrice's collection in 1846.

† 'The Last Judgment';—its purchaser was the Earl of Dudley, in whose possession the picture, now hanging at Dudley House in London, has ever since remained. An engraving of this work (pronounced the finest of Angelico's four representations of the subject), may be found in Mrs. Jameson's 'History of our Lord,' vol. ii. p. 414. Cardinal Fesch was Archbishop of Lyons, and the uncle of Napoleon Buonaparte. His gallery contained in its time the finest private collection of pictures in Rome.

‡ The "libel on Holbein" was bought as an original, from Mr. Rochard, in 1845. It now figures in the National Gallery as 'A Medical Professor,—artist unknown' (No. 195).

who alone of all the painters of Italy united purity of religious aim with perfection of artistical power, is poorly represented by a single head ;* and I ask, in the name of the earnest students of England, that the funds set apart for her gallery may no longer be played with like pebbles in London auction-rooms. Let agents be sent to all the cities of Italy ; let the noble pictures which are perishing there be rescued from the invisibility and ill-treatment which their position too commonly implies, and let us have a national collection which, however imperfect, shall be orderly and continuous, and shall exhibit with something like relative candour and justice the claims to our reverence of those great and ancient builders, whose mighty foundation has been for two centuries concealed by wood, and hay, and stubble, the distorted growing, and thin gleaning of vain men in blasted fields.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

THE AUTHOR OF 'MODERN PAINTERS.'

Jan. 6.

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* The Bellini is the 'Portrait of Doge Leonardo Loredano' (No. 189), purchased in 1844 : four more examples (Nos. 280, 726, 808, 812) of the same "mighty Venetian master" have since been introduced, so that he is no longer "poorly represented by a single head." The Van Eyck is the 'Portrait of Jean Arnolfini and his Wife' (No. 186), purchased in 1842.

From 'The Times,' December 29, 1852.

THE NATIONAL GALLERY.

To the Editor of 'The Times.'

Sir,—I trust that the excitement which has been caused by the alleged destruction of some of the most important pictures in the National Gallery will not be without results, whatever may be the facts of the case with respect to the works in question. Under the name of "restoration," the ruin of the noblest architecture and painting is constant throughout Europe. We shall show ourselves wiser than our neighbours if the loss of two Claudes and the injury of a Paul Veronese* induce us to pay so much attention to the preservation of ancient art as may prevent it from becoming a disputed question in future whether they are indeed pictures which we possess or their skeletons.

As to the facts in the present instance, I can give no opinion. Sir Charles Eastlake and Mr. Uwins† know more than I of oil paintings in

* Claude's 'Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca' (No. 12), and his 'Queen of Sheba' picture (No. 14, Seaport, with figures). The only pictures of Veronese which the Gallery at this time contained, were the 'Consecration of St. Nicholas' (No. 26), and the 'Rape of Europa' (No. 97). It is the former of these two that is here spoken of as injured (see the Report of the National Gallery Committee in 1853).

† Mr. Thomas Uwins, R.A., had succeeded Sir Charles Eastlake as Keeper of the National Gallery in 1847; and resigned, for a similar reason, in 1855.

general, and have far more profound respect for those of Claude in particular. I do not suppose they would have taken from him his golden armour that Turner might bear away a dishonourable victory in the noble passage of arms to which he has challenged his rival from the grave.* Nor can the public suppose that the Curators of the National Gallery have any interest in destroying the works with which they are intrusted. If, acting to the best of their judgment, they have done harm, to whom are we to look for greater prudence or better success? Are the public prepared to withdraw their confidence from Sir C. Eastlake and the members of the Royal Academy, and entrust the national property to Mr. Morris Moore, or to any of the artists and amateurs who have inflamed the sheets of *The Times* with their indignation? Is it not

* The public may not, perhaps, be generally aware that the condition by which the nation retains the two pictures bequeathed to it by Turner, and now in the National Gallery, is that "they shall be hung beside Claude's." †

† 'Dido building Carthage' (No. 498), and 'The Sun rising in a Mist' (No. 479). The actual wording of Turner's will on the matter ran thus: "I direct that the said pictures, or paintings, shall be hung, kept, and placed, that is to say, always between the two pictures painted by Claude, the Seaport and the Mill." Accordingly they now hang side by side with these two pictures (Nos. 5 and 12) in the National Gallery.

evident that the only security which the nation can possess for its pictures must be found in taking such measures as may in future prevent the necessity of their being touched at all? For this is very certain, that all question respecting the effects of cleaning is merely one of the amount of injury. Every picture which has undergone more friction than is necessary at intervals for the removal of dust or dirt, has suffered injury to some extent. The last touches of the master leave the surface of the colour with a certain substantial texture, the bloom of which, if once reached under the varnish, must inevitably be more or less removed by friction of any kind,—how much more by friction aided by solvents? I am well assured that every possessor of pictures who truly loves them, would keep—if it might be—their surfaces from being so much as breathed upon, which may, indeed, be done, and done easily.

Every stranger who enters our National Gallery, if he be a thoughtful person, must assuredly put to himself a curious question. Perceiving that certain pictures—namely, three Correggios, two Raphaels, and a John Bellini—are put under glass,* and that all the others are left exposed, as oil pictures are in general, he must ask himself,—"Is it an ascer-

* See p. 61, note.

tained fact that glass preserves pictures; and are none of the pictures here thought worth a pane of glass but these five?* Or is it unascertained whether glass is beneficial or injurious, and have the Raphaels and Correggios been selected for the trial—'*Fiat experimentum in corpore vili?*'" Some years ago it might have been difficult to answer him; now the answer is easy, though it be strange. The experiment has been made. The Raphaels and Correggios have been under glass for many years: they are as fresh and lovely as when they were first enclosed; they need no cleaning, and will need none for half a century to come; and it must be, therefore, that the rest of the pictures are left exposed to the London atmosphere, and to the operations which its influence renders necessary, simply because they are not thought worth a pane of plate glass. No: there is yet one other possible answer,—that many of them are hung so high, or in such lights, that they could not be seen if they were glazed. Is it then absolutely necessary that they should be hung so high? We are about to build a new National Gallery; may it not be so arranged as that the pictures we place therein may at once be safe and visible?

I know that this has never yet been done in any gallery in Europe, for the European public have

* Query, a misprint? as *six* pictures are mentioned.

never yet reflected that a picture which was worth buying was also worth seeing. Some time or other they will assuredly awake to the perception of this wonderful truth, and it would be some credit to our English common sense if we were the first to act upon it.

I say that a picture which is worth buying is also worth seeing; that is, worth so much room of ground and wall as shall enable us to see it to the best advantage. It is not commonly so understood. Nations, like individuals, buy their pictures in mere ostentation; and are content, so that their possessions are acknowledged, that they should be hung in any dark or out-of-the-way corners which their frames will fit. Or, at best, the popular idea of a national gallery is that of a magnificent palace, whose walls must be decorated with coloured panels, every one of which shall cost £1,000, and be discernible, through a telescope, for the work of a mighty hand.

I have no doubt that in a few years more there will be a change of feeling in this matter, and that men will begin to perceive, what is indeed the truth, —that every noble picture is a manuscript book, of which only one copy exists, or ever can exist; that a national gallery is a great library, of which the books must be read upon their shelves; that

every manuscript ought, therefore, to be placed where it can be read most easily;* and that the style of the architecture and the effect of the saloons are matters of no importance whatsoever, but that our solicitude ought to begin and end in the two imperative requirements—that every picture in the gallery should be perfectly seen and perfectly safe; that none should be thrust up, or down, or aside, to make room for more important ones; that all should be in a good light, all on a level with the eye, and all secure from damp, cold, impurity of atmosphere, and every other avoidable cause of deterioration.

These are the things to be accomplished; and if we set ourselves to do these in our new National Gallery,† we shall have made a greater step in art-teaching than if we had built a new Parthenon. I know that it will be a strange idea to most of us

* "The Art of a nation is, I think, one of the most important points of its history, and a part which, if once destroyed, no history will ever supply the place of; and the first idea of a National Gallery is that it should be a Library of Art, in which the rudest efforts are, in some cases, hardly less important than the noblest."—(National Gallery Commission, 1857,—Mr. Ruskin's evidence.)

† It was at this time proposed to remove the national pictures from Trafalgar Square to some new building to be erected for them elsewhere. This proposal was, however, negatived by the commission ultimately appointed (1857) to consider the matter, and to some extent rendered unnecessary by the enlargement of the gallery, decided upon in 1866.

that Titians and Tintorets ought, indeed, all to have places upon "the line," as well as the annual productions of our Royal Academicians; and I know that the *coup d'œil* of the Gallery must be entirely destroyed by such an arrangement. But great pictures ought not to be subjects of "*coups d'œil.*" In the last arrangement of the Louvre, under the Republic, all the noble pictures in the gallery were brought into one room, with a Napoleon-like resolution to produce effect by concentration of force; and, indeed, I would not part willingly with the memory of that saloon, whose obscurest shadows were full of Correggio; in whose out-of-the-way angles one forgot, here and there, a Raphael; and in which the best Tintoret on this side of the Alps was hung sixty feet from the ground!* But Cleopatra dissolving the pearl was nothing to this; and I trust that, in our own Gallery, our poverty, if not our will, may consent to a more modest and less lavish manner of displaying such treasures as are intrusted to us; and that the very limitation of our possessions may induce us to

* The galleries of the Louvre were reorganized on their being declared national instead of crown property, after the Revolution of 1848; and the choicest pictures were then collected together in the 'grand salon carré,' which, although since rearranged, still contains a similar selection. The 'best Tintoret on this side of the Alps' is the 'Susannah and the Elders,' now No. 349 in that room.

make that the object of our care which can hardly be a ground of ostentation. It might, indeed, be a matter of some difficulty to conceive an arrangement of the collections in the Louvre or the Florence Gallery which should admit of every picture being hung upon the line. But the works in our own, including the Vernon and Turner bequests,* present no obstacle in their number to our making the building which shall receive them a perfect model of what a National Gallery ought to be. And the conditions of this perfection are so simple that if we only turn our attention to these main points it will need no great architectural ingenuity to attain all that is required.

It is evident, in the first place, that the building ought to consist of a series of chambers or galleries lighted from above, and built with such reference to the pictures they are to contain, as that opposite a large picture room enough should be allowed for the spectator to retire to the utmost distance at which it can ever be desirable that its effect should be seen; but, as economy of space would become a most important object when

* The *gift* of Mr. Robert Vernon, in 1847, consisted of 157 pictures, all of them, with two exceptions only, of the British school. The Turner bequest included 105 finished oil paintings, in addition to the numerous sketches and drawings.

every picture was to be hung on a level with the eye, smaller apartments might open from the larger ones for the reception of smaller pictures, one condition being, however, made imperative, whatever space was sacrificed to it—namely, that the works of every master should be collected together, either in the same apartment or in contiguous ones. Nothing has so much retarded the advance of art as our miserable habit of mixing the works of every master and of every century. More would be learned by an ordinarily intelligent observer in simply passing from a room in which there were only Titians to another in which there were only Caraccis, than by reading a volume of lectures on colour. Few minds are strong enough first to abstract and then to generalize the characters of paintings hung at random. Few minds are so dull as not at once to perceive the points of difference, were the works of each painter set by themselves. The fatigue of which most persons complain in passing through a picture gallery, as at present arranged, is indeed partly caused by the straining effort to see what is out of sight, but not less by the continual change of temper and of tone of thought, demanded in passing from the work of one master to that of another.

The works of each being, therefore, set by them-

selves,* and the whole collection arranged in chronological and ethnological order, let apartments be designed for each group large enough to admit of the increase of the existing collection to any probable amount. The whole gallery would thus become of great length, but might be adapted to any form of ground-plan by disposing the whole in a labyrinthine chain, returning upon itself. Its chronological arrangement would necessitate its being continuous, rather than divided into many branches or sections. Being lighted from above, it must be all on the same floor, but ought at least to be raised one story above the ground, and might admit any number of keepers' apartments, or of schools, beneath; though it would be better to make it quite independent of these, in order to diminish the risk of fire. Its walls ought on every side to be surrounded by corridors, so that the interior temperature might be kept equal, and no outer surface of wall on which pictures were hung exposed to the weather. Every picture should be glazed, and the horizon which the painter had given to it placed on a level with the eye.

* An example of a cognate school might, however, be occasionally introduced for the sake of direct comparison, as in one instance would be necessitated by the condition above mentioned attached to part of the Turner bequest.

Lastly, opposite each picture should be a table, containing, under glass, every engraving that had ever been made from it, and any studies for it, by the master's own hand, that remained, or were obtainable. The values of the study and of the picture are reciprocally increased—of the former more than doubled—by their being seen together; and if this system were once adopted, the keepers of the various galleries of Europe would doubtless consent to such exchanges of the sketches in their possession as would render all their collections more interesting.

I trust, sir, that the importance of this subject will excuse the extent of my trespass upon your columns, and that the simplicity and self-evident desirableness of the arrangement I have described may vindicate my proposal of it from the charge of presumption.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

THE AUTHOR OF 'MODERN PAINTERS.'

HERNE HILL, DULWICH, *Dec.* 27.

From 'The Times,' January 27, 1866.

THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

To the Editor of 'The Times.'

Sir,—As I see in your impression of yesterday that my name was introduced in support of some remarks made, at the meeting of the Society of Arts, on the management of the British Museum,* and as the tendency of the remarks I refer to was depreciatory of the efforts and aims of several officers of the Museum—more especially of the work done on the collection of minerals by my friend Mr. Nevil S. Maskelyne †—you will, I hope, permit me, not having been present at the meeting, to express my feeling on the subject briefly in your columns.

There is a confused notion in the existing public mind that the British Museum is partly a parish school, partly a circulating library, and partly a place for Christmas entertainments.

* At the meeting of the Society, in the Hall, Adelphi, Lord Henry Lennox read a paper on 'The Uses of National Museums to Local Institutions,' in which he spoke of Mr. Ruskin's suggestions "adopted and recommended to Parliament in annual reports, and in obedience to distinct Commissions," as having been unwarrantably disregarded since 1858.—See Mr. Ruskin's official report on the Turner Bequest, printed in the 'Report of the Director of the National Gallery to the Lords of the Treasury, 1858,' Appendix vii.

† Professor Nevil Story-Maskelyne (now M.P. for Cricklade) was then, and till his recent resignation, Keeper of Mineralogy at the Museum.

It is none of the three, and, I hope, will never be made any of the three. But especially and most distinctly it is not a "preparatory school," nor even an "academy for young gentlemen," nor even a "working men's college." A national museum is one thing, a national place of education another; and the more sternly and unequivocally they are separated, the better will each perform its office—the one of treasuring and the other of teaching. I heartily wish that there were already, as one day there must be, large educational museums in every district of London, freely open every day, and well lighted and warmed at night, with all furniture of comfort, and full aids for the use of their contents by all classes. But you might just as rationally send the British public to the Tower to study mineralogy upon the Crown jewels as make the unique pieces of a worthy national collection (such as, owing mainly to the exertions of its maligned officers, that of our British Museum has recently become,) the means of elementary public instruction. After men have learnt their science or their art, at least so far as to know a common and a rare example in either, a national museum is useful, and ought to be easily accessible to them; but until then, unique or selected specimens in natural history are without interest to them, and the best art is

as useless as a blank wall. For all those who can use the existing national collection to any purpose, the Catalogue as it now stands is amply sufficient: it would be difficult to conceive a more serviceable one. But the rapidly progressive state of (especially mineralogical) science, renders it impossible for the Curators to make their arrangements in all points satisfactory, or for long periods permanent. It is just because Mr. Maskelyne is doing more active, continual, and careful work than, as far as I know, is at present done in any national museum in Europe—because he is completing gaps in the present series by the intercalation of carefully sought specimens, and accurately reforming its classification by recently corrected analyses—that the collection cannot yet fall into the formal and placid order in which an indolent Curator would speedily arrange and willingly leave it.

I am glad that Lord H. Lennox referred to the passage in my report on the Turner Collection in which I recommended that certain portions of that great series should be distributed, for permanence, among our leading provincial towns.* But I had

* In Mr. Ruskin's official report already mentioned, and which was made at the close of his labours in arranging the Turner drawings, and dated March 27, 1858, he divided the collection into three classes, of which the third consisted of drawings available for distribution among provincial Schools of Art. The passage of the report referred to is as

rather see the whole Turner collection buried, not merely in the cellars of the National Gallery, but with Prospero's staff fathoms in the earth, than that it should be the means of inaugurating the fatal custom of carrying great works of art about the roads for a show. If you *must* make them educational to the public, hang Titian's Bacchus up for a vintner's sign, and give Henry VI.'s Psalter * for a spelling-book to the Bluecoat School; but, at least, hang the one from a permanent post, and chain the other to the boys' desks, and do not send them about in caravans to every annual Bartholomew Fair.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

J. RUSKIN.

DENMARK HILL, *Jan.* 26.

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follows:—"The remainder of the collection consists of drawings of miscellaneous character, from which many might be spared with little loss to the collection in London, and great advantage to students in the Provinces. Five or six collections, each completely illustrative of Turner's modes of study, and successions of practice, might easily be prepared for the Academies of Edinburgh, Dublin, and the principal English manufacturing towns."—See also the similar recommendation with regard to the 'Outlines of John Leech,' in the letter on that subject.

* Titian's 'Bacchus and Ariadne' — already mentioned, p. 58. Henry VI.'s Psalter is in the British Museum ('Domitian A. 17,' in the Cottonian Catalogue). It is of early fifteenth century work, and was executed in England by a French artist for the then youthful king, from whom it takes its name.

From 'The Leicester Chronicle and Mercury,' January 31, and reprinted in 'The Times,' February 2, 1880.

ON THE PURCHASE OF PICTURES.*

Dear Sir,—Your letter is deeply interesting to me, but what use is there in my telling you what to do? The mob won't let you do it. It is fatally true that no one nowadays can appreciate pictures by the Old Masters! and that every one can understand Frith's 'Derby Day'—that is to say, everybody is interested in jockeys, harlots, mountebanks, and men about town; but nobody in saints, heroes, kings, or wise men—either from the east or west. What can you do? If your Committee is strong enough to carry such a resolution as the appointment of any *singly* responsible person, any well-informed gentleman of taste in your neighbourhood, to buy for the Leicester public just what he would buy for himself—that is to say, himself *and his family*,—children being the really most important of the untaught public,—and to answer simply to all accusation—that is, a good and worthy piece of art—(past or present, no matter which),—make the most and best you can of it. That method so long as tenable will be useful. I know of no other.—Faithfully yours, J. RUSKIN.

* This letter was written in reply to one requesting Mr. Ruskin's views on the best means of forming a public Gallery at Leicester.

LETTERS ON ART.

III.

PRE-RAPHAELITISM.

THE PRE-RAPHAELITE BRETHREN. 1851 (May 9).
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'THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD,' HOLMAN HUNT. 1854.
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III.

PRE-RAPHAELITISM.

From 'The Times,' May 13, 1851.

THE PRE-RAPHAELITE BRETHREN.

To the Editor of 'The Times.'

Sir,—Your usual liberality will, I trust, give a place in your columns to this expression of my regret that the tone of the critique which appeared in *The Times* of Wednesday last on the works of Mr. Millais and Mr. Hunt, now in the Royal Academy, should have been scornful as well as severe.*

I regret it, first, because the mere labour bestowed on those works, and their fidelity to a certain order of truth, (labour and fidelity which are altogether in-

* That the critique was sufficiently bitter, may be gathered from the following portions of it: "These young artists have unfortunately become notorious by addicting themselves to an antiquated style and an affected simplicity in painting. . . . . We can extend no toleration to a mere senile imitation of the cramped style, false perspective, and crude colour of remote antiquity. We want not to see what Fuseli termed drapery 'snapped instead of folded'; faces bloated into apoplexy, or extenuated to skeletons; colour borrowed from the jars in a druggist's shop, and expression forced into caricature. . . . . That morbid infatuation which sacrifices truth, beauty, and genuine feeling to mere eccentricity, deserves no quarter at the hands of the public."

disputable,) ought at once to have placed them above the level of mere contempt; and, secondly, because I believe these young artists to be at a most critical period of their career—at a turning-point, from which they may either sink into nothingness or rise to very real greatness; and I believe also, that whether they choose the upward or the downward path, may in no small degree depend upon the character of the criticism which their works have to sustain. I do not wish in any way to dispute or invalidate the general truth of your critique on the Royal Academy; nor am I surprised at the estimate which the writer formed of the pictures in question when rapidly compared with works of totally different style and aim; nay, when I first saw the chief picture by Millais in the Exhibition of last year,* I had nearly come to the same conclusion myself. But I ask your permission, in justice to artists who have at least given much time and toil to their pictures, to institute some more serious inquiry into their merits and faults than your

* A sacred picture (No. 518) upon the text, "And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends" (Zechariah xiii. 6). He had two other pictures in the Academy of 1850, namely, 'Portrait of a gentleman and his grandchild' (No. 429), and 'Ferdinand lured by Ariel' (No. 504);—Shakspeare, 'Tempest,' Act ii. sc. 2.

general notice of the Academy could possibly have admitted.

Let me state, in the first place, that I have no acquaintance with any of these artists, and very imperfect sympathy with them. No one who has met with any of my writings will suspect me of desiring to encourage them in their Romanist and Tractarian tendencies.* I am glad to see that Mr. Millais' lady in blue† is heartily tired of her painted window and idolatrous toilet table; and I have no particular respect for Mr. Collins' lady in white, because her sympathies are limited by a dead wall, or divided between some gold fish and a tadpole—(the latter Mr. Collins may, perhaps, permit me to

* See the next letter, p. 96. With regard to the religious tone of some parts of Mr. Ruskin's early writings, it is worth noting that in the recent reissue (1880) of the 'Seven Lamps of Architecture,' "some pieces of rabid and utterly false Protestantism . . . are cut from text and appendix alike."—(Preface, p. 1; and see the note on one such omission on p. 19.) So again in the preface to the final edition of 'Modern Painters,' issued in 1873, Mr. Ruskin stated that his objection to republishing unrevised the first two volumes of that work was that "they are written in a narrow enthusiasm, and the substance of their metaphysical and religious speculation is only justifiable on the ground of its absolute sincerity."—See also 'Sesame and Lilies,' 1871 ed., Preface, p. 2.

† The pre-Raphaelite pictures exhibited in the Academy of this year, and referred to here and in the following letter, were the 'Mariana' (No. 561) of Millais, 'The Return of the Dove to the Ark' (No. 651), and 'The Woodman's Daughter' (No. 799), (see Coventry Patmore's Poems, vol. i. p. 184,—4 vol. ed., 1879), both also by Millais; the 'Valentine receiving (rescuing?) Sylvia from Proteus' (No. 594) of Holman Hunt; and the 'Convent Thoughts' (No. 493) of Mr. C.

suggest *en passant*, as he is already half a frog, is rather too small for his age). But I happen to have a special acquaintance with the water plant, *Alisma Plantago*, among which the said gold fish are swimming; and as I never saw it so thoroughly or so well drawn, I must take leave to remonstrate with you, when you say sweepingly that these men 'sacrifice *truth* as well as feeling to eccentricity.' For as a mere botanical study of the water lily and *Alisma*, as well as of the common lily and several other garden flowers, this picture would be invaluable to me, and I heartily wish it were mine.

But, before entering into such particulars, let me correct an impression which your article is likely to induce in most minds, and which is altogether false. These pre-Raphaelites (I cannot compliment them on common sense in choice of a *nom de guerre*)

Collins, to which were affixed the lines from 'Midsummer Night's Dream' (Act i. sc. 1),

> "Thrice blessed they, that master so their blood
> To undergo such maiden pilgrimage;"

and the verse (Psalm cxliii. 5), "I meditate on all Thy works; I muse on the work of Thy hands." The last-named artist also had a portrait of Mr. William Bennett (No. 718) in the Exhibition,—not, however, alluded to in this letter. Mr. Charles Allston Collins, who was the son of William Collins, R.A., and the younger brother of Mr. Wilkie Collins, subsequently turned his attention to literature, and may be remembered as the author of 'A Cruise upon Wheels,' 'The Eye-Witness,' and other writings.

do *not* desire nor pretend in any way to imitate antique painting as such. They know very little of ancient paintings who suppose the works of these young artists to resemble them.* As far as I can judge of their aim—for, as I said, I do not know the men themselves—the Pre-Raphaelites intend to surrender no advantage which the knowledge or inventions of the present time can afford to their art. They intend to return to early days in this one point only—that, as far as in them lies, they will draw either what they see, or what they suppose might have been the actual facts of the scene they desire to represent, irrespective of any conventional rules of picture-making; and they have chosen their unfortunate though not inaccurate name because all artists did this before Raphael's time, and after Raphael's time did *not* this, but sought to paint fair pictures, rather than represent stern facts; of which the consequence has been that, from Raphael's time to this day, historical art has been in acknowledged decadence.

* Compare 'Modern Painters,' vol. i. p. 415, note, where allusion is made to the painters of a society which "unfortunately, or rather unwisely, has given itself the name of 'Pre-Raphaelite'; unfortunately, because the principles on which its members are working are neither pre- nor post-Raphaelite, but everlasting. They are endeavouring to paint with the highest possible degree of completion, what they see in nature, without reference to conventional established rules; but by no means to imitate the style of any past epoch."

Now, sir, presupposing that the intention of these men was to return to archaic *art* instead of to archaic *honesty*, your critic borrows Fuseli's expression respecting ancient draperies 'snapped instead of folded,' and asserts that in these pictures there is a '*servile* imitation of *false* perspective.' To which I have just this to answer:—

That there is not one single error in perspective in four out of the five pictures in question; and that in Millais' 'Mariana' there is but this one—that the top of the green curtain in the distant window has too low a vanishing-point; and that I will undertake, if need be, to point out and prove a dozen worse errors in perspective in any twelve pictures, containing architecture, taken at random from among the works of the popular painters of the day.

Secondly: that, putting aside the small Mulready, and the works of Thorburn and Sir W. Ross, and perhaps some others of those in the miniature room which I have not examined, there is not a single study of drapery in the whole Academy, be it in large works or small, which for perfect truth, power, and finish could be compared for an instant with the black sleeve of the Julia, or with the velvet on the breast and the chain mail of the Valentine, of Mr. Hunt's picture; or with the white draperies

on the table of Mr. Millais' 'Mariana,' and of the right-hand figure in the same painter's 'Dove returning to the Ark.'

And further: that as studies both of drapery and of every minor detail, there has been nothing in art so earnest or so complete as these pictures since the days of Albert Durer. This I assert generally and fearlessly. On the other hand, I am perfectly ready to admit that Mr. Hunt's 'Sylvia' is not a person whom Proteus or any one else would have been likely to fall in love with at first sight; and that one cannot feel very sincere delight that Mr. Millais' 'Wives of the Sons of Noah' should have escaped the Deluge; with many other faults besides on which I will not enlarge at present, because I have already occupied too much of your valuable space, and I hope to enter into more special criticism in a future letter.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

THE AUTHOR OF 'MODERN PAINTERS.'

DENMARK HILL, *May* 9.

From 'The Times,' May 30, 1851.

THE PRE-RAPHAELITE BRETHREN.

To the Editor of 'The Times.'

Sir,—Your obliging insertion of my former letter encourages me to trouble you with one or two further notes respecting the pre-Raphaelite pictures. I had intended, in continuation of my first letter, to institute as close an inquiry as I could into the character of the morbid tendencies which prevent these works from favourably arresting the attention of the public; but I believe there are so few pictures in the Academy whose reputation would not be grievously diminished by a deliberate inventory of their errors, that I am disinclined to undertake so ungracious a task with respect to this or that particular work. These points, however, may be noted, partly for the consideration of the painters themselves, partly that forgiveness of them may be asked from the public in consideration of high merits in other respects.

The most painful of these defects is unhappily also the most prominent—the commonness of feature in many of the principal figures. In Mr. Hunt's 'Valentine defending Sylvia,' this is, indeed, almost the only fault. Further examination of this picture has even raised the estimate I had previously formed

of its marvellous truth in detail and splendour in colour; nor is its general conception less deserving of praise: the action of Valentine, his arm thrown round Sylvia, and his hand clasping hers at the same instant as she falls at his feet, is most faithful and beautiful, nor less so the contending of doubt and distress with awakening hope in the half-shadowed, half-sunlit countenance of Julia. Nay, even the momentary struggle of Proteus with Sylvia just past, is indicated by the trodden grass and broken fungi of the foreground. But all this thoughtful conception, and absolutely inimitable execution, fail in making immediate appeal to the feelings, owing to the unfortunate type chosen for the face of Sylvia. Certainly this cannot be she whose lover was

> "As rich in having such a jewel,
> As twenty seas, if all their sands were pearl." *

Nor is it, perhaps, less to be regretted that, while in Shakspeare's play there are nominally 'Two Gentlemen,' in Mr. Hunt's picture there should only be one,—at least, the kneeling figure on the right has by no means the look of a gentleman. But this may be on purpose, for any one who remembers the conduct of Proteus throughout the

* 'Two Gentlemen of Verona,' Act ii. sc. 4. The scene of the picture was taken from Act v. sc. 4.

previous scenes will, I think, be disposed to consider that the error lies more in Shakspeare's nomenclature than in Mr. Hunt's ideal.

No defence can, however, be offered for the choice of features in the left-hand figure of Mr. Millais' "Dove returning to the Ark." I cannot understand how a painter so sensible of the utmost refinement of beauty in other objects should deliberately choose for his model a type far inferior to that of average humanity, and unredeemed by any expression save that of dull self-complacency. Yet let the spectator who desires to be just turn away from this head, and contemplate rather the tender and beautiful expression of the stooping figure, and the intense harmony of colour in the exquisitely finished draperies; let him note also the ruffling of the plumage of the wearied dove, one of its feathers falling on the arm of the figure which holds it, and another to the ground, where, by the by, the hay is painted not only elaborately, but with the most perfect ease of touch and mastery of effect, especially to be observed because this freedom of execution is a modern excellence, which it has been inaccurately stated that these painters despise, but which, in reality, is one of the remarkable distinctions between their painting and that of Van Eyck or Hemling, which caused me to say

in my first letter that "those knew little of ancient painting who supposed the works of these men to resemble it."

Next to this false choice of feature, and in connection with it, is to be noted the defect in the colouring of the flesh. The hands, at least in the pictures in Millais, are almost always ill painted, and the flesh tint in general is wrought out of crude purples and dusky yellows. It appears just possible that much of this evil may arise from the attempt to obtain too much transparency—an attempt which has injured also not a few of the best works of Mulready. I believe it will be generally found that close study of minor details is unfavourable to flesh painting; it was noticed of the drawing by John Lewis, in the old water-colour exhibition of 1850,* (a work which, as regards its treatment of detail, may be ranged in the same class with the pre-Raphaelite pictures,) that the faces were the worst painted portions of the whole.

The apparent want of shade is, however, perhaps

* 'The Hhareem' (No. 147), noticed, partly to the above effect, in *The Times*, May 1, 1850. It will be remembered that John Lewis is, with Turner, Millais, Prout, Mulready, and Edwin Landseer, one of the artists particularly mentioned in Mr. Ruskin's pamphlet on 'Pre-Raphaelitism' (1851), p. 33; and see also 'Academy Notes,' III., 1857, p. 48.

the fault which most hurts the general eye. The fact is, nevertheless, that the fault is far more in the other pictures of the Academy than in the pre-Raphaelite ones. It is the former that are false, not the latter, except so far as every picture must be false which endeavours to represent living sunlight with dead pigments. I think Mr. Hunt has a slight tendency to exaggerate reflected lights; and if Mr. Millais has ever been near a piece of good painted glass, he ought to have known that its tone is more dusky and sober than that of his Mariana's window. But for the most part these pictures are rashly condemned because the only light which we are accustomed to see represented is that which falls on the artist's model in his dim painting-room, not that of sunshine in the fields.

I do not think I can go much further in fault-finding. I had, indeed, something to urge respecting what I supposed to be the Romanizing tendencies of the painters; but I have received a letter assuring me that I was wrong in attributing to them anything of the kind; whereupon, all I can say is that, instead of the "pilgrimage" of Mr. Collins' maiden over a plank and round a fish-pond, that old pilgrimage of Christiana and her children towards the place where they should "look the Fountain of Mercy in the face," would have been more to the purpose in

these times. And so I wish them all heartily good speed, believing in sincerity that if they temper the courage and energy which they have shown in the adoption of their systems with patience and discretion in framing it, and if they do not suffer themselves to be driven by harsh or careless criticism into rejection of the ordinary means of obtaining influence over the minds of others, they may, as they gain experience, lay in our England the foundations of a school of art nobler than the world has seen for three hundred years.*

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

THE AUTHOR OF 'MODERN PAINTERS.'

DENMARK HILL, *May* 26.

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* "I have great hope that they may become the foundation of a more earnest and able school of art than we have seen for centuries." —'Modern Painters,' vol. i. p. 415, note.

From 'The Times,' May 5, 1854.

'THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.'

By Holman Hunt.

To the Editor of 'The Times.'

Sir,—I trust that, with your usual kindness and liberality, you will give me room in your columns for a few words respecting the principal Præ-Raphaelite picture in the Exhibition of the Royal Academy this year. Its painter is travelling in the Holy Land, and can neither suffer nor benefit by criticism. But I am solicitous that justice should be done to his work, not for his sake, but for that of the large number of persons who, during the year, will have an opportunity of seeing it, and on whom, if rightly understood, it may make an impression for which they will ever afterwards be grateful.*

I speak of the picture called "the Light of the World," by Mr. Holman Hunt. Standing by it yesterday for upwards of an hour, I watched the effect it produced upon the passers-by. Few stopped

* Of the two pictures described in this and the following letter, 'The Light of the World' is well known from the engraving of it by W. H. Simmons. It was originally purchased by Mr. Thomas Combe, of Oxford, whose widow has recently presented it to Keble College, where it now hangs, in the library. The subject of the second picture, which is less well known, and which has never been engraved, sufficiently appears from the letter describing it.

to look at it, and those who did almost invariably with some contemptuous expression, founded on what appeared to them the absurdity of representing the Saviour with a lantern in his hand. Now, it ought to be remembered that, whatever may be the faults of a Præ-Raphaelite picture, it must at least have taken much time; and therefore it may not unwarrantably be presumed that conceptions which are to be laboriously realized are not adopted in the first instance without some reflection. So that the spectator may surely question with himself whether the objections which now strike every one in a moment might not possibly have occurred to the painter himself, either during the time devoted to the design of the picture, or the months of labour required for its execution; and whether, therefore, there may not be some reason for his persistence in such an idea, not discoverable at the first glance.

Mr. Hunt has never explained his work to me. I give what appears to me its palpable interpretation.

The legend beneath it is the beautiful verse,—"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."—Rev. iii. 20. On the left-hand side of the picture is seen this door of the human soul.

It is fast barred: its bars and nails are rusty; it is knitted and bound to its stanchions by creeping tendrils of ivy, showing that it has never been opened. A bat hovers about it; its threshold is overgrown with brambles, nettles, and fruitless corn, —the wild grass "whereof the mower filleth not his hand, nor he that bindeth the sheaves his bosom." Christ approaches it in the night-time,—Christ, in his everlasting offices, of prophet, priest, and king. He wears the white robe, representing the power of the Spirit upon him; the jewelled robe and breast-plate, representing the sacerdotal investiture; the rayed crown of gold, inwoven with the crown of thorns; not dead thorns, but now bearing soft leaves, for the healing of the nations.

Now, when Christ enters any human heart, he bears with him a twofold light: first, the light of conscience, which displays past sin, and afterwards the light of peace, the hope of salvation. The lantern, carried in Christ's left hand, is this light of conscience. Its fire is red and fierce; it falls only on the closed door, on the weeds which encumber it, and on an apple shaken from one of the trees of the orchard, thus marking that the entire awakening of the conscience is not merely to committed, but to hereditary guilt.

The light is suspended by a chain, wrapt about

the wrist of the figure, showing that the light which reveals sin appears to the sinner also to chain the hand of Christ.

The light which proceeds from the head of the figure, on the contrary, is that of the hope of salvation; it springs from the crown of thorns, and, though itself sad, subdued, and full of softness, is yet so powerful that it entirely melts into the glow of it the forms of the leaves and boughs, which it crosses, showing that every earthly object must be hidden by this light, where its sphere extends.

I believe there are very few persons on whom the picture, thus justly understood, will not produce a deep impression. For my own part, I think it one of the very noblest works of sacred art ever produced in this or any other age.

It may, perhaps, be answered, that works of art ought not to stand in need of interpretation of this kind. Indeed, we have been so long accustomed to see pictures painted without any purpose or intention whatsoever, that the unexpected existence of meaning in a work of art may very naturally at first appear to us an unkind demand on the spectator's understanding. But in a few years more I hope the English public may be convinced of the simple truth, that neither a great fact, nor a

great man, nor a great poem, nor a great picture, nor any other great thing, can be fathomed to the very bottom in a moment of time; and that no high enjoyment, either in picture-seeing or any other occupation, is consistent with a total lethargy of the powers of the understanding.

As far as regards the technical qualities of Mr. Hunt's painting, I would only ask the spectator to observe this difference between true Præ-Raphaelite work and its imitations. The true work represents all objects exactly as they would appear in nature in the position and at the distances which the arrangement of the picture supposes. The false work represents them with all their details, as if seen through a microscope. Examine closely the ivy on the door in Mr. Hunt's picture, and there will not be found in it a single clear outline. All is the most exquisite mystery of colour; becoming reality at its due distance. In like manner examine the small gems on the robe of the figure. Not one will be made out in form, and yet there is not one of all those minute points of green colour, but it has two or three distinctly varied shades of green in it, giving it mysterious value and lustre.

The spurious imitations of Præ-Raphaelite work represent the most minute leaves and other objects with sharp outlines, but with no variety of colour,

and with none of the concealment, none of the infinity of nature. With this spurious work the walls of the Academy are half covered ; of the true school one very small example may be pointed out, being hung so low that it might otherwise escape attention. It is not by any means perfect, but still very lovely,—the study of a calm pool in a mountain brook, by Mr. J. Dearle, No. 191, "Evening, on the Marchno, North Wales."*

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

THE AUTHOR OF 'MODERN PAINTERS.'

DENMARK HILL, *May* 4.

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* Mr. Dearle informs me that this picture was bought from the walls of the Academy by a prize-holder in the Art Union of London. He adds that the purchaser resided in either America or Australia, and that the picture is now, therefore, presumably in one or other of those countries.

From 'The Times,' May 25, 1854.

'THE AWAKENING CONSCIENCE.'

By Holman Hunt.

To the Editor of 'The Times.'

Sir,—Your kind insertion of my notes on Mr. Hunt's principal picture encourages me to hope that you may yet allow me room in your columns for a few words respecting his second work in the Royal Academy, the "Awakening Conscience." Not that this picture is obscure, or its story feebly told. I am at a loss to know how its meaning could be rendered more distinctly, but assuredly it is not understood. People gaze at it in a blank wonder, and leave it hopelessly; so that, though it is almost an insult to the painter to explain his thoughts in this instance, I cannot persuade myself to leave it thus misunderstood. The poor girl has been sitting singing with her seducer; some chance words of the song, "Oft in the stilly night," have struck upon the numbed places of her heart; she has started up in agony; he, not seeing her face, goes on singing, striking the keys carelessly with his gloved hand.

I suppose that no one possessing the slightest knowledge of expression could remain untouched by the countenance of the lost girl, rent from its beauty into sudden horror; the lips half open, indistinct in

their purple quivering ; the teeth set hard ; the eyes filled with the fearful light of futurity, and with tears of ancient days. But I can easily understand that to many persons the careful rendering of the inferior details in this picture cannot but be at first offensive, as calling their attention away from the principal subject. It is true that detail of this kind has long been so carelessly rendered, that the perfect finishing of it becomes a matter of curiosity, and therefore an interruption to serious thought. But, without entering into the question of the general propriety of such treatment, I would only observe that, at least in this instance, it is based on a truer principle of the pathetic than any of the common artistical expedients of the schools. Nothing is more notable than the way in which even the most trivial objects force themselves upon the attention of a mind which has been fevered by violent and distressful excitement. They thrust themselves forward with a ghastly and unendurable distinctness, as if they would compel the sufferer to count, or measure, or learn them by heart. Even to the mere spectator a strange interest exalts the accessories of a scene in which he bears witness to human sorrow. There is not a single object in all that room—common, modern, vulgar (in the vulgar sense, as it may be), but it becomes tragical, if rightly read.

That furniture so carefully painted, even to the last vein of the rosewood—is there nothing to be learnt from that terrible lustre of it, from its fatal newness; nothing there that has the old thoughts of home upon it, or that is ever to become a part of home? Those embossed books, vain and useless—they also new—marked with no happy wearing of beloved leaves; the torn and dying bird upon the floor; the gilded tapestry, with the fowls of the air feeding on the ripened corn; the picture above the fireplace, with its single drooping figure—the woman taken in adultery; nay, the very hem of the poor girl's dress, at which the painter has laboured so closely, thread by thread, has story in it, if we think how soon its pure whiteness may be soiled with dust and rain, her outcast feet failing in the street; and the fair garden flowers, seen in that reflected sunshine of the mirror,—these also have their language—

> "Hope not to find delight in us, they say,
> For we are spotless, Jessy—we are pure." *

I surely need not go on. Examine the whole range of the walls of the Academy,—nay, examine

* Shenstone: Elegy xxvi. The subject of the poem is that of the picture described here. The girl speaks,—

> "If through the garden's flowery tribes I stray,
> Where bloom the jasmines that could once allure,
> Hope not," etc.

those of all our public and private galleries,—and while pictures will be met with by the thousand which literally tempt to evil, by the thousand which are directed to the meanest trivialities of incident or emotion, by the thousand to the delicate fancies of inactive religion, there will not be found one powerful as this to meet full in the front the moral evil of the age in which it is painted; to waken into mercy the cruel thoughtlessness of youth, and subdue the severities of judgment into the sanctity of compassion.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

THE AUTHOR OF 'MODERN PAINTERS.'

DENMARK HILL.

From 'The Liverpool Albion,' January 11, 1858.

PRE-RAPHAELITISM IN LIVERPOOL.*

I believe the Liverpool Academy has, in its decisions of late years, given almost the first instance on record of the entirely just and beneficial working of academical system. Usually such systems have degenerated into the application of formal rules, or the giving partial votes, or the distribution of a partial patronage; but the Liverpool awards have indicated at once the keen perception of new forms of excellence, and the frank honesty by which alone such new forms can be confessed and accepted. I do not, however, wonder at the outcry. People who suppose the pre-Raphaelite work to be only a condition of meritorious eccentricity, naturally suppose, also, that the consistent preference of it can only be owing to clique. Most people look upon paintings as they do on plants or minerals, and think they ought to have in their collections specimens of

* The prize of the Liverpool Academy was awarded in 1858 to Millais's 'Blind Girl.' Popular feeling, however, favoured another picture, the 'Waiting for the Verdict' of A. Solomon, and a good deal of discussion arose as to whether the prize had been rightly awarded. As one of the judges, and as a member of the Academy, Mr. Alfred Hunt addressed a letter on the matter to Mr. Ruskin, the main portion of whose reply was sent by him to the *Liverpool Albion* and is now reprinted here. Mr. Solomon's picture had been exhibited in the Royal Academy of 1857 (No. 562), and is mentioned in Mr. Ruskin's Notes to the pictures of that year (p. 32).

everybody's work, as they have specimens of all earths or flowers. They have no conception that there is such a thing as a real right and wrong, a real bad and good, in the question. However, you need not, I think, much mind. Let the Academy be broken up on the quarrel; let the Liverpool people buy whatever rubbish they have a mind to; and when they see, as in time they will, that it *is* rubbish, and find, as find they will, every pre-Raphaelite picture gradually advance in influence and in value, you will be acknowledged to have borne a witness all the more noble and useful, because it seemed to end in discomfiture; though it will *not* end in discomfiture. I suppose I need hardly say anything of my own estimate of the two pictures on which the arbitrement has arisen. I have surely said often enough, in good black type already, what I thought of pre-Raphaelite works, and of other modern ones. Since Turner's death I consider that any average work from the hand of any of the four leaders of pre-Raphaelitism (Rosetti, Millais, Hunt, John Lewis,) is, singly, worth at least *three* of any other pictures whatever by living artists.

JOHN RUSKIN.

From 'The Witness' (Edinburgh), March 27, 1858.

GENERALIZATION AND THE SCOTCH PRE-RAPHAELITES.

To the Editor of 'The Witness.'

I was very glad to see that good and firm defence of the pre-Raphaelite Brothers in the *Witness** the other day; only, my dear Editor, it appears to me that you take too much trouble in the matter. Such a lovely picture as that of Waller Paton's must either speak for itself, or nobody can speak for it. If you Scotch people don't know a bit of your own country when you see it, who is to help you to know it? If, in that mighty wise town of Edinburgh, everybody still likes flourishes of brush better than ferns, and dots of paint better than birch leaves, surely there is nothing for it but to leave them in quietude of devotion to dot and faith in flourish. At least I can see no other way of dealing. All those platitudes from the *Scotsman*, which you took the pains to answer, have been answered ten thousand times already, without the smallest effect,—the

* The defence was made in a second notice (March 6, 1858) of the Exhibition of the Royal Scottish Academy, then open to the public. The picture of Mr. Waller Paton (now R.S.A.) alluded to here was entitled 'Wild Water, Inveruglass' (161); he also exhibited one of 'Arrochar Road, Tarbet' (314). The platitudes of the *Scotsman* against the pre-Raphaelites were contained in its second notice of the Exhibition (February 20, 1858).

kind of people who utter them being always too misty in their notions ever to feel or catch an answer. You may as well speak to the air, or rather to a Scotch mist. The oddest part of the business is, that all those wretched fallacies about generalization might be quashed or crushed in an instant, by reference to any given picture of any great master who ever lived. There never was anybody who generalized, since paint was first ground, except Opie, and Benjamin West, and Fuseli, and one or two other such modern stars—in their own estimates,—night-lights, in fact, extinguishing themselves, not odoriferously at daybreak, in a sputter in the saucer. Titian, Giorgione, Veronese, Tintoret, Raphael, Leonardo, Correggio,—never any of them dreamt of generalization, and would have rejected the dream as having come by the horn gate,* if they had. The only difference between them and the pre-Raphaelites is, that the latter love nature better, and don't yet know their artist's business so well, having everything to find out for themselves athwart all sorts of contradiction, poor fellows; so they are apt to put too much into their pictures—for love's sake, and then not to bring this much

* There must be some error here, as it is the *true* dreams that come through the horn gate, while the fruitless ones pass through the gate of *ivory*. The allusion is to Homer (Odyssey, xix. 562).

into perfect harmony; not yet being able to bridle their thoughts entirely with the master's hand. I don't say therefore—I never have said—that their pictures are faultless,—many of them have gross faults; but the modern pictures of the generalist school, which are opposed to them, have nothing else but faults: they are not pictures at all, but pure daubs and perfect blunders; nay, they have never had aim enough to be called anything so honourable as blunders; they are mere emptinesses and idlenesses,—thistledown without seeds, and bubbles without colour; whereas the worst pre-Raphaelite picture has something *in* it; and the great ones, such as Windus's "Burd Helen," * will

* In illustration of the old Scottish ballad of 'Burd Helen,' who, fearing her lover's desertion, followed him, dressed as a foot-page, through flood, if not through fire :—

"Lord John he rode, Burd Helen ran,
The live-lang sumer's day,
Until they cam' to Clyde's Water,
Was filled frae bank to brae.

'See'st thou yon water, Helen,' quoth he,
'That flows frae bank to brim?'
'I trust to God, Lord John,' she said,
'You ne'er will see me swim.'"

This picture (No. 141 in the Edinburgh Exhibition of 1858) was first exhibited in the Royal Academy of 1856. In the postscript to his Academy Notes of that year, Mr. Ruskin, after commenting on the "crying error of putting it nearly out of sight," so that he had at first hardly noticed it, estimates this picture as second only to the 'Autumn Leaves' of Mr. Millais in that exhibition. The following is a portion of his comment on it: "I see just enough of the figures to make

hold their own with the most noble pictures of all time.

Always faithfully yours,

J. RUSKIN.

By the way, what ails you at our pre-Raphaelite Brothers' conceits? Windus's heart's ease might

me sure that the work is thoughtful and intense in the highest degree. The pressure of the girl's hand on her side; her wild, firm, desolate look at the stream—she not raising her eyes as she makes her appeal, for fear of the greater mercilessness in the human look than in the glaze of the gliding water—the just choice of the type of the rider's cruel face, and of the scene itself—so terrible in haggardness of rattling stones and ragged heath,—are all marks of the action of the very grandest imaginative power, shortened only of hold upon our feelings, because dealing with a subject too fearful to be for a moment believed true."

The picture was originally purchased by Mr. John Miller, of Liverpool; at the sale of whose collection by Christie and Manson, two years later, in 1858, it fetched the price of two hundred guineas. At the same sale the 'Blind Girl,' alluded to in the previous letter, was sold for three hundred.

For the poem illustrated by the picture, see Aytoun's 'Ballads of Scotland,' i. 239, where a slightly different version of it is given: it may also be found in 'Percy's Reliques' (vol. iii. p. 59), under the title of 'Child Waters.' Other versions of this ballad, and other ballads of the same name, and probably origin, may be found in Jameson's collection, vol. i. p. 117, vol. ii. p. 376, in Buchan's 'Ancient Ballads of the North,' ii. 29 (1879 ed.), and in 'Four Books of Scottish Ballads,' Edin., 1868, Bk. ii. p. 21, where it is well noted that 'Burd Helen' corresponds to the 'Proud Elise' of northern minstrels, 'La Prude Dame Elise' of the French, and the 'Gentle Lady Elise' of the English —(Burd, Prud, Preux). It is also possible that it is a corruption of Burdalayn, or Burdalane, meaning an only child, a maiden, etc.

have been a better conceit, I grant you;* but for the conceits themselves, as such, I always enjoy them particularly; and I don't understand why I shouldn't. What's wrong in them?

* The *Witness* had objected to the "astonishing fondness" of the pre-Raphaelite school for 'conceits,' instancing as typically far-fetched that in the picture of 'Burd Helen,' where Lord John was represented 'pulling to pieces a heartsease,' as he crosses the stream.

LETTERS ON ART.

IV.

TURNER.

THE TURNER BEQUEST. 1856.
THE TURNER BEQUEST AND THE NATIONAL GALLERY. 1857.
THE TURNER SKETCHES AND DRAWINGS. 1858.
THE TURNER GALLERY AT KENSINGTON. 1859.
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'TURNERS,' FALSE AND TRUE. 1871.
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IV.

TURNER.

From 'The Times,' October 28, 1856.

THE TURNER BEQUEST.

To the Editor of 'The Times.'

Sir,—As active measures are being now* taken to give the public access to the pictures and drawings left by the late Mr. Turner, you will perhaps allow me space in your columns for a few words respecting them.

I was appointed by Mr. Turner one of his executors. I examined the will, and the state of the property needing administration, and, finding that the questions arising out of the obscurity of the one and the disorder of the other would be numerous and would involve a kind of business in which I had no skill or knowledge, I resigned the office; but in the course of the inquiry I catalogued the most interesting of the drawings which are now national

* The first exhibition of Turner's pictures after his death was opened at Marlborough House early in November 1856, seven months subsequent to the final decision as to the proper distribution of the property, which was the subject of Turner's will.

property, and respecting these the public will, I think, be glad of more definite information than they at present possess. They are referable mainly to three classes.

1. Finished water-colour drawings.
2. Studies from nature, or first thoughts for pictures; in colour.
3. Sketches in pencil or pen and ink.

The drawings belonging to the two latter classes are in various stages of completion, and would contain, if rightly arranged, a perfect record of the movements of the master's mind during his whole life. Many of them were so confused among prints and waste-paper that I could neither collect nor catalogue them all in the time I had at my disposal; some portfolios I was not able even to open. The following statement, therefore, omits mention of many, and I believe even of some large water-colour drawings. There are in the first class forty-five drawings of the "Rivers of France;" fifty-seven illustrating Rogers' Poems; twenty-three of the "River Scenery" and "Harbours of England;" four marine vignettes; five middle-sized drawings (including the beautiful "Ivy Bridge"); and a drawing, some three feet by two, finished with exquisite care, of a scene in the Val d'Aosta; total, 135.

It would occupy too much of your space if I were to specify all the various kinds of studies forming the second class. Many are far carried, and are, to my mind, more precious and lovely than any finished drawings; respecting some, there may be question whether Turner regarded them as finished or not. The larger number are light sketches, valuable only to artists, or to those interested in the processes of Turner's mind and hand. The total number of those which I catalogued as important is 1,757.

The sketches of the third class are usually more elaborate than the coloured ones. They consist of studies from nature, or for composition, in firm outline, usually on gray paper, heightened with white. They include, among other subjects, more or less complete, fifty of the original drawings for the Liber Studiorum, and many of the others are of large folio size. The total of those I consider important is 1,322. Now the value of these sketches to the public consists greatly, first, in the preservation of each, as far as possible, in the state in which Turner left it; secondly, in their careful arrangement and explanation; thirdly, in convenience of general access to them. Permit me a word on each of these heads.

Turner was in the habit of using unusual vehicles, and in the coloured studies many hues are wrought out by singular means and with singular delicacy—

nearly always in textures which the slightest damp (to which the drawings would necessarily be subjected in the process of mounting) would assuredly alter. I have made many experiments in mounting, putting coloured drawings, of which I had previously examined the tones, into the hands of the best mounters, and I have never yet had a drawing returned to me without alteration. The vast mass of these sketches, and the comparative slightness of many, would but too probably induce a carelessness and generalization in the treatment they might have to undergo still more fatally detrimental to them.

Secondly, a large number are without names, and so slight that it requires careful examination and somewhat extended acquaintance with Turner's works to ascertain their intention. The sketches of this class are nearly valueless, till their meaning is deciphered, but of great interest when seen in their proper connexion. Thus there are three progressive studies for one vignette in *Rogers' Italy** (Hannibal passing the Alps), which I extricated from three several heaps of other mountain sketches with which they had no connexion. Thirdly, a large number of the drawings are executed with body colour, the bloom of which any friction or handling would in a short period destroy. Their delicate

* See Rogers' 'Italy,' p. 29.

tones of colour would be equally destroyed by continuous exposure to the light or to smoke and dust.

Drawings of a valuable character, when thus destructible, are in European museums hardly accessible to the general public. But there is no need for this seclusion. They should be enclosed each in a light wooden frame, under a glass the surface of which a raised mount should prevent them from touching. These frames should slide into cases, containing about twelve drawings each, which would be portable to any part of the room where they were to be seen. I have long kept my own smaller Turner drawings in this manner; fifteen frames going into the depth of about a foot. Men are usually accused of "bad taste," if they express any conviction of their own ability to execute any given work. But it would perhaps be better if in people's sayings in general, whether concerning others or themselves, there were less taste, and more truth; and I think it, under the circumstances, my duty to state that I believe none would treat these drawings with more scrupulous care, or arrange them with greater patience, than I should myself; that I am ready to undertake the task, and enter upon it instantly; that I will furnish, in order to prove the working of the system proposed, a hundred of

the frames, with their cases, at my own cost; and that within six weeks of the day on which I am permitted to begin work, (illness or accident not interfering,) I will have the hundred drawings arranged, framed, accompanied by a printed explanatory catalogue, and ready for public inspection. It would then be in the power of the commissioners entrusted with the administration of this portion of the national property to decide if any, or how many more of the sketches, should be exhibited in the same manner, as a large mass of the less interesting ones might be kept as the drawings are at the British Museum, and shown only on special inquiry.

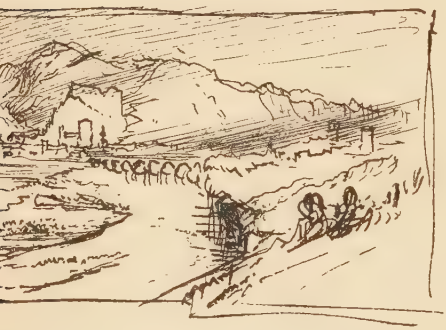
I will only undertake this task on condition of the entire management of the drawings, in every particular, being entrusted to me; but I should ask the advice of Mr. Carpenter, of the British Museum,* on all doubtful points, and entrust any necessary operations only to the person who mounts the drawings for the British Museum.

I make this offer† in your columns rather than privately, first, because I wish it to be clearly known

* William Hookham Carpenter, for many years Keeper of the prints and drawings at the British Museum. He died in 1866.

† Mr. Ruskin's offer was accepted, and he eventually arranged the drawings, and, in particular, the four hundred now exhibited in one of the lower rooms of the National Gallery, and contained in the kind of cases above proposed, presented by Mr. Ruskin to the Gallery. Mr.

of work a great many leaves being lighter – some blanks but great many also elaborate in the upper depart – some containing an exquisite composition on each side of the leaf – others. each no bigger than



with about that quantity of ink in each – but every touch of inestimable, done with his whole soul in it. Generally the sketches & other are over evergrown. as in examples enclosed, every incident being noted that occurring at the moment of sketch

to the public; and also because I have no time to make representations in official ways, the very hours which I could give to the work needing to be redeemed by allowing none to be wasted in formalities.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

J. RUSKIN.

DENMARK HILL, *Oct.* 27.

Ruskin also printed, as promised, a descriptive and explanatory catalogue of a hundred of these four hundred drawings. (Catalogue of the Turner Sketches in the National Gallery. For private circulation. Part I. 1857.—Only one hundred copies printed, and no further parts issued.)

Writing (1858) to Mr. Norton of his whole work in arranging the Turner drawings, Mr. Ruskin said:—"To show you a little what my work has been, I have fac-similed for you, as nearly as I could, one of the nineteen thousand sketches (comprised in the Turner bequest). It, like most of them, is not a sketch, but a group of sketches, made on both sides of the leaf of the note-book. The note-books vary in contents from sixty to ninety leaves: there are about two hundred books of the kind,—three hundred and odd note-books in all; and each leaf has on an average this quantity of work, a great many leaves being slighter, some blank, but a great many also elaborate in the highest degree, some containing ten exquisite compositions on each side of the leaf, thus, (see facsimile,) each no bigger than this,—and with about that quantity of work in each, but every touch of it inestimable, done with his whole soul in it. Generally the slighter sketches are written over it everywhere, as in the example enclosed, every incident being noted that was going on at the moment of the sketch."—('List of Turner's Drawings shown in connection with Mr. Norton's Lectures.' Boston: 1874. p. 11.) The facsimile alluded to by Mr. Norton is reproduced here.

From 'The Times,' July 9, 1857.

THE TURNER BEQUEST AND THE NATIONAL GALLERY.

To the Editor of 'The Times.'

Sir,—I am sorry that accident has prevented my seeing the debate of Friday last* on the vote for the National Gallery until to-day. Will you permit me, thus late, to correct the statement made by Lord Elcho, that I offered to arrange Turner's pictures, or could have done so as well as Mr. Wornum? † I only offered to arrange the sketches, and that I am doing; but I never would have undertaken the pictures, which were in such a state of decay that I had given up many for lost; while, also, most of them belonged to periods of Turner's work with which I was little acquainted. Mr. Wornum's patience and carefulness of research in discovering their subjects, dates of exhibition, and other points of interest connected with them, have been of the greatest service; and it will be long before the labour and judgment which he has shown in compiling, not only this, but all the various catalogues now used by the public at our galleries, will

* July 3, 1857, upon the vote of £23,165 for the National Gallery.

† The late Mr. Ralph Nicholson Wornum, who succeeded Mr. Uwins as Keeper of the National Gallery in 1855, and retained that office till his death in 1878.

be at all justly appreciated. I find more real, serviceable, and trustworthy facts in one of these catalogues, than in half a dozen of the common collections of lives of painters.

Permit me to add further, that during long residence in Venice I have carefully examined the Paul Veronese lately purchased by the Government.* When I last saw it, it was simply the best Veronese in Italy, if not in Europe, (the "Marriage in Cana" of the Louvre is larger and more magnificent, but not so perfect in finish); and, for my own part, I should think no price too large for it; but putting my own deep reverence for the painter wholly out of the question, and considering the matter as it

* 'The Family of Darius at the feet of Alexander after the Battle of Issus,' purchased at Venice from the Pisani collection in 1857. Lord Elcho had complained in the course of the debate that the price, £13,650, paid for this picture, had been excessive; and in reply allusion was made to the still higher price (£23,000) paid for the 'Immaculate Conception' of Murillo, purchased for the Louvre by Napoleon III., in 1852, from the collection of Marshal Soult.—Of the great Veronese Mr. Ruskin also wrote thus: 'It at once, to my mind, raises our National Gallery from a second-rate to a first-rate collection. I have always loved the master, and given much time to the study of his works, but this is the best I have ever seen." (Turner Notes, 1857, ed. v., p. 89, note.) So again before the National Gallery Commission, earlier in the same year, he had said, "I am rejoiced to hear (of its rumoured purchase). If it is confirmed, nothing will have given me such pleasure for a long time. I think it is the most precious Paul Veronese in the world, as far as the completeness of the picture goes, and quite a priceless picture."

will appear to most persons at all acquainted with the real character and range of Venetian work, I believe the market value of the picture ought to be estimated at perhaps one-third more than the Government have paid for it. Without doubt the price of the Murillo lately purchased at Paris was much enhanced by accidental competition; under ordinary circumstances, and putting both the pictures to a fair trial of market value, I believe the Veronese to be worth at least double the Murillo; in an artistical point of view, the latter picture could not be put in any kind of comparison whatever with the Veronese.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

J. RUSKIN.

OXFORD, *July* 7.

From 'The Literary Gazette,' November 13, 1858,—(partly reprinted in 'The Two Paths,' Appendix iv.)

THE TURNER SKETCHES AND DRAWINGS.*

To the Editor of 'The Literary Gazette.'

Sir,—I do not think it generally necessary to answer criticism; yet as yours is the first sufficient notice which has been taken of the important collection of sketches at Marlborough House, and as your strictures on the arrangement proposed for the body of the collection, as well as on some statements in my catalogue, are made with such candour and good feeling, will you allow me to offer one or two observations in reply to them? The mode of arrangement to which you refer as determined on by the trustees has been adopted, not to discourage the study of the drawings by the public, but to put all more completely at their service. Drawings so small in size and so delicate in execution cannot be seen, far less copied, when

* The present letter was written in reply to a criticism, contained in the *Literary Gazette* of November 6, 1858, on Mr. Ruskin's "Catalogue of the Turner Sketches and Drawings exhibited at Marlborough House 1857-8." The subjects of complaint made by the *Gazette*, sufficiently appear from this letter. They were, briefly, first, the mode of exhibition of the Turner Drawings proposed by Mr. Ruskin in his official report already alluded to, pp. 78 and 80, note; and, secondly, two alleged hyperboles and one omission in the Catalogue itself.

hung on walls. As now arranged, they can be put into the hands of each visitor, or student, as a book is into those of a reader; he may examine them in any light, or in any position, and copy them at his ease. The students who work from drawings exhibited on walls will, I am sure, bear willing witness to the greater convenience of the new system. Four hundred drawings are already thus arranged for public use; framed, and disposed in eighty portable boxes, each containing five sketches, so that eighty students might at once be supplied with five drawings apiece. The oil paintings at Marlborough House, comprising as they do the most splendid works which Turner ever produced, and the 339 drawings exhibited beside them, are surely enough for the amusement of loungers,—for do you consider as anything better than loungers those persons who do not care enough for the Turner drawings to be at the trouble of applying for a ticket of admission, and entering their names in a book,—that is to say, who will not, to obtain the privilege of quiet study of perfect art, take, once for all, as much trouble as would be necessary to register a letter, or book, or parcel?

I entirely waive for the moment the question of exposure to light. I put the whole issue on the ground of greatest public convenience. I believe it

to be better for the public to have two collections of Turner's drawings than one; nay, it seems to me just the perfection of all privilege to have one gallery for quiet, another for disquiet; one into which the curious, idle, or speculative may crowd on wet or weary days, and another in which people desirous of either thinking or working seriously may always find peace, light, and elbow-room. I believe, therefore, that the present disposition of these drawings will be at once the most convenient and the most just, even supposing that the finest works of Turner would not be injured by constant exposure. But that they would be so admits of no debate. It is not on my judgment, nor on any other unsupported opinion, that the trustees have acted, but in consideration of facts now universally admitted by persons who have charge of drawings. You will find that the officers both of the Louvre and of the British Museum refuse to expose their best drawings or missal-pages to light, in consequence of ascertained damage received by such drawings as have been already exposed; and among the works of Turner I am prepared to name an example in which, the frame having protected a portion while the rest was exposed, the covered portion is still rich and lovely in colours, while the exposed spaces are reduced in

some parts nearly to white paper, and the colour in general to a dull brown.

You allude to the contrary chance that some hues may be injured by darkness. I believe that some colours are indeed liable to darken in perpetual shade, but not while occasionally exposed to moderate light, as these drawings will be in daily use; nor is any liability to injury, even by perpetual shade, as yet demonstrable with respect to the Turner drawings; on the contrary, those which now form the great body of the national collection were never out of Turner's house until his death, and were all kept by him in tight bundles or in clasped books; and all the drawings so kept are in magnificent preservation, appearing as if they had just been executed, while every one of those which have been in the possession of purchasers and exposed in frames are now faded in proportion to the time and degree of their exposure; the lighter hues disappearing, especially from the skies, so as sometimes to leave hardly a trace of the cloud-forms. For instance, the great Yorkshire series is, generally speaking, merely the wreck of what it once was.* That water-colours are not injured by darkness is also sufficiently proved by the exquisite preservation

* The cloud-forms which have disappeared from the drawings may be seen in the engravings.

of missal paintings, when the books containing them have been little used. Observe, then, you have simply this question to put to the public: "Will you have your Turner drawings to look at when you are at leisure, in a comfortable room, under such limitations as will preserve them to you for ever, or will you make an amusing exhibition of them (*if* amusing, which I doubt,) for children and nursery-maids; dry your wet coats by them, and shake off the dust from your feet upon them, for a score or two of years, and then send them to the waste-paper merchant?" That is the simple question; answer it, for the public, as you think best.

Permit me to observe farther, that the small interest manifested in the existing Turner collection at Marlborough House does not seem to justify any further effort at exhibition. There are already more paintings and drawings placed in those rooms than could be examined properly in years of labour. But how placed? Thrust into dark corners, nailed on spare spaces of shutters, backs of doors, and tottering elongations of screens; hung with their faces to the light, or with their backs to the light, or with their sides to the light, so that it 'rakes' them, (I use an excellent expression of Sir Charles Eastlake's,) throwing every irregularity of surface into view as if they were maps in relief of hill

countries ; hung, in fine, in every conceivable mode that can exhibit their faults, or conceal their meaning, or degrade their beauty. Neither Mr. Wornum nor I are answerable for this ; we have both done the best we could under the circumstances ; the public are answerable for it, who suffer such things without care and without remonstrance. If they want to derive real advantage from the treasures they possess, let them show some regard for them, and build, or at least express some desire to get built, a proper gallery for them. I see no way at present out of the embarrassments which exist respecting the disposition of the entire national collection ; but the Turner gallery was intended by Turner himself to be a distinct one, and there is no reason why a noble building should not be at once provided for it. Place the oil pictures now at Marlborough House in beautiful rooms, each in a light fit and sufficient for it, and all on a level with the eye ; range them in chronological order ; place the sketches at present exhibited, also in chronological order, in a lateral gallery ; let illustrative engravings and explanations be put in cases near them ; furnish the room richly and gracefully, as the Louvre is furnished, and I do not think the public would any longer complain of not having enough to amuse them on rainy days.

That we ought to do as much for our whole national collection is as certain as that we shall not do it for many a year to come, nor until we have wasted twice as much money as would do it nobly in vain experiments on a mean scale. I have no immediate hope in this matter, else I might perhaps ask you to let me occupy your columns with some repetition, in other words (such repetition being apparently always needed in these talking days), of what I have already stated in the Appendix to my Notes on the oil-pictures* at Marlborough House. But I will only, being as I say hopeless in the matter, ask you for room for a single sentence.

"If ever we come to understand that the function of a picture, after all, with respect to mankind, is not merely to be bought, but to be seen, it will follow that a picture which deserves a price deserves a place; and that all paintings which are worth keeping, are worth, also, the rent of so much wall as shall be necessary to show them to the best advantage, and in the least fatiguing way for the spectator.

"It would be interesting if we could obtain a return of the sum which the English nation pays annually for park walls to enclose game, stable walls to separate horses, and garden walls to ripen peaches; and if we could compare this ascertained sum with what it pays for walls to show its art upon."

* 'Notes on the *oil* pictures,' to be distinguished from the later catalogue of the Turner sketches and drawings with which this letter directly deals. See ante, p. 127, note.

I ask you to reprint this, because the fact is that if either Mr. Wornum at the National Gallery, or Mr. Carpenter at the British Museum, had as much well-lighted wall at their disposal as most gentlemen's gardeners have, they could each furnish the public with art enough to keep them gazing from one year's end to another's. Mr. Carpenter has already made a gallant effort with some screens in a dark room; but in the National Gallery, whatever mode of exhibition may be determined upon for the four hundred framed drawings, the great mass of the Turner sketches (about fifteen thousand, without counting mere colour memoranda) must lie packed in parcels in tin cases, simply for want of room to show them. It is true that many of these are quite slight, and would be interesting to none but artists. There are, however, upwards of five thousand sketches in pencil outline,* which are just as interesting as those now exhibited at Marlborough House; and which might be constantly exhibited, like those,

* By the way, you really ought to have given me some credit for the swivel frames in the desks of Marlborough House, which enable the public, however rough-handed, to see the drawings on both sides of the same leaf.†

† The identical frames, each containing examples of the sketches in pencil outline to which the letter alludes, may be seen in the windows of the lower rooms of the National Gallery, now devoted to the exhibition of the Turner drawings.

without any harm, if there were only walls to put them on.

I have already occupied much of your space. I do not say too much, considering the importance of the subject, but* I must [with more diffidence] ask you to allow me yet leave to reply to the objections you make to two statements [and to one omission] in my Catalogue, as those objections would otherwise diminish its usefulness. I have asserted that in a given drawing (named as one of the chief in the series), Turner's pencil did not move over the thousandth of an inch without meaning; and you charge this expression with extravagant hyperbole. On the contrary, it is much within the truth, being merely a mathematically accurate description of fairly good execution in either drawing or engraving. It is only necessary to measure a piece of any ordinarily good work to ascertain this. Take, for instance, Finden's engraving at the 180th page of Rogers's poems,† in which the face of the figure, from the chin to the top of the brow, occupies just a quarter of an inch, and the space between

* The rest of this letter may, with the exception of its two last paragraphs, and the slight alterations noted, be also found in 'The Two Paths,' Appendix iv., 'Subtlety of Hand' (pp. 226-9 of the new, and pp. 263-6 of the original edition), where the words bracketed [sic] in this reprint of it are, it will be seen, omitted.

† From a vignette design by Stothard of a single figure, to illustrate the poem 'On a Tear.' (Rogers' Poems, London, 1834 ed.)

the upper lip and chin as nearly as possible one-seventeenth of an inch. The whole mouth occupies one-third of this space, say, one-fiftieth of an inch; and within that space both the lips and the much more difficult inner corner of the mouth are perfectly drawn and rounded, with quite successful and sufficiently subtle expression. Any artist will assure you, that in order to draw a mouth as well as this, there must be more than twenty gradations of shade in the touches; that is to say, in this case, gradations changing, with meaning, within less than the thousandth of an inch.

But this is mere child's play compared to the refinement of any first-rate mechanical work, much more of brush or pencil drawing by a master's hand. In order at once to furnish you with authoritative evidence on this point, I wrote to Mr. Kingsley, tutor of Sidney-Sussex College, a friend to whom I always have recourse when I want to be precisely right in any matter; for his great knowledge both of mathematics and of natural science is joined, not only with singular powers of delicate experimental manipulation, but with a keen sensitiveness to beauty in art. His answer, in its final statement respecting Turner's work, is amazing even to me; and will, I should think, be more so to your readers. Observe the suc-

cessions of measured and tested refinement; here is No. 1:

"The finest mechanical work that I know of is that done by Nobert in the way of ruling lines. I have a series of lines ruled by him on glass, giving actual scales from ·000024 and ·000016 of an inch, perfectly correct to these places of decimals; [*] and he has executed others as fine as ·000012, though I do not know how far he could repeat these last with accuracy."

This is No. 1, of precision. Mr. Kingsley proceeds to No. 2:

"But this is rude work compared to the accuracy necessary for the construction of the object-glass of a microscope such as Rosse turns out."

I am sorry to omit the explanation which follows of the ten lenses composing such a glass, "each of which must be exact in radius and in surface, and all have their axes coincident;" but it would not be intelligible without the figure by which it is illustrated, so I pass to Mr. Kingsley's No. 3:

"I am tolerably familiar," he proceeds, "with the actual grinding and polishing of lenses and specula, and have produced by my own hands some by no means bad optical work; and I have copied no small amount of Turner's work, and I still look with awe at the combined delicacy and precision of his hand; *it beats optical work out of*

[* That is to say, accurate in measures estimated in *millionths* of inches.]

*sight.** In optical work, as in refined drawing, the hand goes beyond the eye, [†] and one has to depend upon the feel; and when one has once learned what a delicate affair touch is, one gets a horror of all coarse work, and is ready to forgive any amount of feebleness, sooner than the boldness which is akin to impudence. In optics the distinction is easily seen when the work is put to trial; but here too, as in drawing, it requires an educated eye to tell the difference when the work is only moderately bad; but with 'bold' work nothing can be seen but distortion and fog, and I heartily wish the same result would follow the same kind of handling in drawing; but here, the boldness cheats the unlearned by looking like the precision of the true man. It is very strange how much better our ears are than our eyes in this country: if an ignorant man were to be 'bold' with a violin, he would not get many admirers, though his boldness was far below that of ninety-nine out of a hundred drawings one sees."

[† In case any of your readers should question the use, in drawing, of work too fine for the touches to be individually, I quote a sentence from my 'Elements of Drawing.'‡ "*All* fine colouring, like fine drawing, is delicate; so delicate, that if at last you see the colour you are putting on, you are putting on too much. You ought to feel a change wrought in the general tone by touches which are individually too pale to be seen."]

* Doubly emphasized in 'The Two Paths,' where the words are printed thus: "*I still look with awe at the combined delicacy and precision of his hand;* IT BEATS OPTICAL WORK OUT OF SIGHT."

‡ See the 'Elements of Drawing,' Letter III. on Colour and Composition, p. 232.

The words which I have italicized* in the above extract are those which were surprising to me. I knew that Turner's was as refined as any optical work, but had no idea of its going beyond it. Mr. Kingsley's word "awe," occurring just before, is, however, as I have often felt, precisely the right one. When once we begin at all to understand the work of any truly great executor, such as that of any of the three great Venetians [(Tintoret, Titian, and Veronese)], Correggio, or Turner, the awe of it is something greater than can be felt from the most stupendous natural scenery. For the creation of such a system as a high human intelligence, endowed with its ineffably perfect instruments of eye and hand, is a far more appalling manifestation of Infinite Power than the making either of seas or mountains. After this testimony to the completion of Turner's work, I need not at length defend myself from the charge of hyperbole in the statement that, "as far as I know, the galleries of Europe may be challenged to produce one sketch† that shall equal the chalk

* 'The Two Paths' reprint has "put in italics."

† The following note is here added to the reprint in 'The Two Paths':—"A sketch, observe,—not a printed drawing. Sketches are only proper subjects of comparison with each other when they contain about the same quantity of work: the test of their merit is the quantity of truth told with a given number of touches. The assertion in the

study No. 45, or the feeblest of the memoranda in the 71st and following frames;"* which memoranda, however, it should have been observed, are stated at the forty-fourth page to be in some respects "the grandest work in grey that he did in his life."

For I believe that, as manipulators, none but the four men whom I have just named (the three Venetians and Correggio) were equal to Turner; and, as far as I know, none of these four men put their full strength into sketches. But whether they did or not, my statement in the Catalogue is limited by my own knowledge, and as far as I can trust that knowledge: it is not an enthusiastic statement, but an entirely calm and considered one. It may be a mistake, but it is not an hyperbole.

Lastly, you object that the drawings for the "*Liber Studiorum*" are not included in my catalogue. They are not so, because I did not consider them as, in a true sense, drawings at all; they are

Catalogue which this letter was written to defend was made respecting the sketch of Rome, No. 101."

* No. 45 was a 'Study of a Cutter.' Mr. Ruskin's note to it in the Catalogue is partly as follows: "I have never seen any chalk sketch which for a moment could be compared with this for soul and power. . . . I should think that the power of it would be felt by most people; but if not, let those who do not feel its strength, try to copy it." See the Catalogue under No. 45, as also under No. 71, referred to above.

merely washes of colour laid roughly to guide the mezzotint engraver in his first process; the drawing, properly so called, was all put in by Turner when he etched the plates, or superadded by repeated touchings on the proofs. These brown "guides," —for they are nothing more, are entirely unlike the painter's usual work, and in every way inferior to it; so that students wishing to understand the composition of the "*Liber*" must always work from the plates, and not from these first indications of purpose.* I have put good impressions of two of the plates in the same room, in order to show their superiority; and for the rest, thought it useless to increase the bulk of the Catalogue by naming sub-

* In a letter to Mr. Norton written in the same year as this one to the *Literary Gazette*, Mr. Ruskin thus speaks of the value of these plates:—"Even those who know most of art may at first look be disappointed with the Liber Studiorum. For the nobleness of these designs is not more in what *is* done than in what *is not* done in them. Every touch in these plates is related to every other, and has no permission of withdrawn, monastic virtue, but is only good in its connection with the rest, and in that connection infinitely and inimitably good. The showing how each of these designs is connected by all manner of strange intellectual chords and nerves with the pathos and history of this old English country of ours, and with the history of European mind from earliest mythology down to modern rationalism and irrationalism,—all this was what I meant to try and show in my closing work; but long before that closing I felt it to be impossible."—(Extract from a letter of Mr. Ruskin, 1858, quoted in the 'List of Turner Drawings, etc.,' already mentioned, p. 6.)

jects which have been published and well known these thirty years.*

Permit me, in conclusion, to thank you for drawing attention to the subject of this great national collection; and, again asking your indulgence for trespassing so far upon your space, to subscribe myself,

Very respectfully yours,

J. RUSKIN.

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* The *Literary Gazette* of November 20, 1858, contains a reply to this letter, but as it did not provoke a further letter from Mr. Ruskin, it is not noticed in detail here.

From 'The Times,' October 21, 1859.

THE TURNER GALLERY AT KENSINGTON.*

To the Editor of 'The Times.'

Sir,—At the time of my departure for the Continent some months ago I had heard it was proposed to light the Turner Gallery, at Kensington, with gas; but I attached no importance to the rumour, feeling assured that a commission would be appointed on the subject, and that its decision would be adverse to the mode of exhibition suggested.

Such a commission has, I find, been appointed; and has, contrary to my expectations, approved and confirmed the plan of lighting proposed.

It would be the merest presumption in me to expect weight to be attached to any opinion of mine, opposed to that of any one of the gentlemen who formed the commission; but as I was officially employed in some of the operations connected with the arrangement of the Turner Gallery at Marlborough-house, and as it might therefore be supposed by the public that I at least concurred in

* There was at the date of this and the following letter an exhibition of Turner drawings at the South Kensington Museum. These pictures have, however, been since removed to the National Gallery, and the only works of Turner now at Kensington are some half a dozen oil paintings belonging to the Sheepshanks collection, and about the same number of water-colour drawings, which form part of the historical series of British water-colour paintings.

recommending the measures now taken for exhibition of the Turner pictures in the evening, at Kensington, I must beg your permission to state in your columns that I take no share in the responsibility of lighting the pictures either of Reynolds or Turner with gas; that, on the contrary, my experience would lead me to apprehend serious injury to those pictures from such a measure; and that it is with profound regret that I have heard of its adoption.

I specify the pictures of Reynolds and Turner, because the combinations of colouring material employed by both these painters are various, and to some extent unknown; and also because the body of their colours shows peculiar liability to crack, and to detach itself from the canvass. I am glad to be able to bear testimony to the fitness of the gallery at Kensington, as far as could be expected under the circumstances, for the exhibition of the Turner pictures by daylight, as well as to the excellence of Mr. Wornum's chronological arrangement of them in the three principal rooms.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

J. RUSKIN.

DENMARK HILL, *Oct.* 20.

P.S. I wish the writer of the admirable and exhaustive letter which appeared in your columns of

yesterday on the subject of Mr. Scott's design for the Foreign Office would allow me to know his name.*

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* This refers to a letter signed "E. A. F." which appeared in *The Times* of October 19, 1859, advising the adoption of Mr. Gilbert Scott's Gothic design for the Foreign Office in preference to any Classic design. The writer entered at some length into the principles of Gothic and Classic architecture, which he briefly summed up in the last sentence of his letter:—"Gothic, then, is national; it is constructively real; it is equally adapted to all sorts of buildings; it is convenient; it is cheap. In none of these does Italian surpass it; in most of them it is very inferior to it." See the letters on the Oxford Museum as to the adaptability of Gothic,—included in Section vi. of these Letters on Art. With regard to the cheapness of Gothic, the correspondent of *The Times* had pointed out that while it may be cheap and yet thoroughly good so far as it goes, Italian *must* always be costly.

From 'The Daily Telegraph,' July 5, 1876.

TURNER'S DRAWINGS.

To the Editor of 'The Daily Telegraph.'

Sir,—I am very heartily glad to see the subject of Turner's drawings brought more definitely before the public in your remarks on the recent debate * in Parliament. It is indeed highly desirable that these drawings should be made more accessible, and I will answer your reference to me by putting you in possession of all the facts which it is needful that the public should know or take into consideration respecting them, in either judging what has been hitherto done by those entrusted with their care, or taking measures for obtaining greater freedom in their use. Their *use*, I say, as distinguished from the mere pleasure of seeing them. This pleasure, to the general public, is very small indeed. You appear not to be aware that three hundred of the finest examples, including all the originals of the Liber Studiorum, were framed by myself, especially for the public, in the year 1858, and have been

* Hardly a debate. Lord Francis Hervey had recently (June 30, 1876) put a question in the House of Commons to Lord Henry Lennox (First Commissioner of Works) as to whether it was the fact that many of Turner's drawings were at that time stowed in the cellars of the National Gallery, and had never been exhibited. The *Daily Telegraph* in a short article on the matter (July 1, 1876,) appealed to Mr. Ruskin for his opinion on the exhibition of these drawings.

exhibited every day, and all day long, ever since in London. But the public never stops a moment in the room at Kensington where they hang; and the damp, filth, and gas (under the former management of that institution*) soiled their frames and warped the drawings, "by friend remembered not."

You have been also misinformed in supposing that "for some years these aquarelles were unreservedly shown, and in all the fulness of daylight." Only the 'Seine' series (rivers of France), the rivers of England, the harbours of England, and the Rogers' vignettes (about a hundred drawings in all), were exhibited in the dark under-room of Marlborough House, and a few larger and smaller examples scattered up and down in the room of the National Gallery, including Fort Bard, Edinburgh, and Ivy Bridge.‡ These drawings are all finished, most of them have been engraved; they were shown as the choicest of the collection, and there is no question but that they should always be perfectly

* Now I trust, under Mr. Poynter and Mr. Sparkes, undergoing thorough reform.†

† Mr. Poynter, R.A., was then, as now, Director, and Mr. Sparkes Head Master, of the Art School at the South Kensington Museum.

‡ For notes of these drawings see the Catalogue of the Turner Sketches and Drawings already mentioned—(*a*) The Battle of Fort Bard, Val d'Aosta, p. 32; (*b*) the Edinburgh, p. 30; and (*c*) the Ivy Bridge, Devon, p. 32.

accessible to the public. There are no other finished drawings in the vast mass of the remaining material for exhibition and means of education. But these are *all* the drawings which Turner made during his lifetime, in colour, chalk, pencil, and ink, for his own study or delight ; that is to say, pencil sketches to be counted by the thousand (how many thousands I cannot safely so much as guess), and assuredly upwards of two thousand coloured studies, many of exquisite beauty ; and all instructive as no other water-colour work ever was before, or has been since ; besides the ink and chalk studies for all his great Academy pictures.*

There are in this accumulation of drawings means of education in the noblest principles of elementary art and in the most accomplished science of colour for every drawing-school in England, were they properly distributed. Besides these, there are the three hundred chosen drawings already named, now at Kensington, and about two hundred more of equal value, now in the lower rooms of the National Gallery, which the Trustees permitted me to choose out of the mass, and frame for general service.

* I have omitted to add to my note (p. 122) on Mr. Ruskin's arrangement of the Turner drawings a reference to his own account of the labour which that arrangement involved, and of the condition in which he found the vast mass of the sketches. See 'Modern Painters,' vol. v., Preface, p. vi.

They are framed as I frame exercise-drawings at Oxford, for my own schools. They are, when in use, perfectly secure from dust and all other sources of injury; slide, when done with, into portable cabinets; are never exposed to light, but when they are being really looked at; and can be examined at his ease, measured, turned in whatever light he likes, by every student or amateur who takes the smallest interest in them. But it is necessary, for this mode of exhibition, that there should be trustworthy persons in charge of the drawings, as of the MSS. in the British Museum, and that there should be attendants in observation, as in the Print Room of the Museum, that glasses may not be broken, or drawings taken out of the frames.

Thus taken care of, and thus shown, the drawings may be a quite priceless possession to the people of England for the next five centuries; whereas those exhibited in the Manchester Exhibition were virtually destroyed in that single summer.* There is not one of them but is the mere wreck of what it was. I do not choose to name destroyed drawings in the possession of others; but I will name the

* The Art Treasures Exhibition in 1857, being the year in which the lectures contained in the 'Political Economy of Art' were delivered. See 'A Joy for Ever'—Ruskin's Works, vol. xi. p. 80.)

vignette of the Plains of Troy in my own, which had half the sky baked out of it in that fatal year, and the three drawings of Richmond (Yorkshire), Egglestone Abbey, and Langharne Castle,* which have had by former exposure to light their rose-colours entirely destroyed, and half of their blues, leaving nothing safe but the brown.

I do not think it necessary to repeat my former statements respecting the injurious power of light on certain pigments rapidly, and on all eventually. The respective keepers of the Print Room and of the Manuscripts in the British Museum are the proper persons to be consulted on that matter, their experience being far larger than mine, and over longer epochs. I will, however, myself undertake to show from my own collection a water-colour of the eleventh century absolutely as fresh as when it was laid—having been guarded from light; and water-

* 'The Plains of Troy';—see for a note of this drawing Mr. Ruskin's Notes on his own 'Turners,' 1878, p. 45, where he describes it as "one of the most elaborate of the Byron vignettes, and full of beauty," adding that "the meaning of the sunset contending with the storm is the contest of the powers of Apollo and Athene;" and for the engraving of it, see Murray's edition of Byron's Life and Works, (1832, seventeen volumes,) where it forms the vignette title-page of vol. vii. For the Richmond and the Egglestone Abbey, also in the possession of Mr. Ruskin, see the above-mentioned Notes, p. 29 (Nos. 26 and 27). The Langharne Castle was formerly in the possession of Mr. W. M. Bigg, at the sale of whose collection in 1868 it was sold for £451.

colour burnt by sunlight into a mere dirty stain on the paper, in a year, with the matched piece from which it was cut beside it.

The public may, therefore, at their pleasure treat their Turner drawings as a large exhibition of fireworks, see them explode, clap their hands, and have done with them; or they may treat them as an exhaustless library of noble learning. To this end, they need, first, space and proper light—north light, as clear of smoke as possible, and large windows; and then proper attendance—that is to say, well-paid librarians and servants.

The space will of course be difficult to obtain, for while the British public of the upper classes are always ready to pay any money whatever for space to please their pride in their own dining-rooms and ball-rooms, they would not, most of them, give five shillings a year to get a good room in the National Gallery to show the national drawings in. As to the room in which it is at present proposed to place them in the new building, they might just as well, for any good that will ever be got out of them there, be exhibited in a railway tunnel.

And the attendants will also be difficult to obtain For—and this is the final fact to which I beg your notice—these drawings now in question were, as I above stated, framed by me in 1858. They have

been perfectly 'accessible' ever since, and are so now, as easily as any works* in the shops of Regent Street are accessible over the counter, if you have got a shopman to hand them to you. And the British public have been whining and growling about their exclusion from the sight of these drawings for the last eighteen years, simply because, while they are willing to pay for any quantity of sentinels to stand in boxes about town and country, for any quantity of flunkeys to stand on boards for additional weight to carriage horses, and for any quantity of footmen to pour out their wine and chop up their meat for them, they would not for all these eighteen years pay so much as a single attendant to hand them the Turner drawings across the National Gallery table; but only what was needful to obtain for two days in the week the withdrawal from his other duties in the Gallery of the old servant of Mr. Samuel Rogers.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

J. RUSKIN.

BRANTWOOD, *July* 3.

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* A misprint for 'wares'; see next letter, p. 153.

From 'The Daily Telegraph,' July 19, 1876.

TURNER'S DRAWINGS.

To the Editor of 'The Daily Telegraph.'

Sir,—In justice to our living water-colour artists, will you favour me by printing the accompanying letter,* which I think will be satisfactory to many of your readers, on points respecting which my own may have given some of them a false impression? In my former letter, permit me to correct the misprint of 'works' in Regent Street for "wares."

I have every reason to suppose Mr. Collingwood Smith's knowledge of the subject entirely trustworthy; but when all is conceded, must still repeat that no water-colour work of value should ever be constantly exposed to light, or even to the air of a crowded metropolis, least of all to gaslight or its fumes.

I am, Sir, yours, etc.,

J. RUSKIN.

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE, *July* 16.

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* Addressed to Mr. Ruskin by Mr. Collingwood Smith, and requesting Mr. Ruskin to state in a second letter that the remarks as to the effect of light on the water-colours of Turner did not extend to water-colour drawings in general; but that the evanescence of the colours in Turner's drawings was due partly to the peculiar vehicles with which he painted, and partly to the grey paper (saturated with indigo) on which he frequently worked. Mr. Ruskin complied with this request by thus forwarding for publication Mr. Collingwood Smith's letter.

From 'The Times,' April 25, 1876.

COPIES OF TURNER'S DRAWINGS.

To the Editor of 'The Times.'

Sir,—You will oblige me by correcting the misstatement in your columns of the 22nd,* that "only copies of the copies" of Turner exhibited at

* The references to *The Times* allude to an article on the 'Copies of Turner Drawings,' by Mr. William Ward, of 2, Church Terrace, Richmond, Surrey, which were then, as now, exhibited for sale in the rooms of the Fine Art Society.

Of these copies of Turner, Mr. Ruskin says, "They are executed with extreme care under my own eye by the draughtsman trained by me for the purpose, Mr. Ward. Everything that can be learned from the smaller works of Turner may be as securely learned from these drawings. I have been more than once in doubt, seeing original and copy together, which was which; and I think them about the best works that can now be obtained for a moderate price, representing the authoritative forms of art in landscape."—Extract from letter of Mr. Ruskin, written in 1867. List of Turner Drawings, etc., shown in connection with Mr. Norton's lectures. Boston, 1874, p. 9. (See also 'Ariadne Florentina,' p. 221, note.)

The following comment of Mr. Ruskin on one of Mr. Ward's most recent copies is also interesting as evidence that the opinions expressed in this letter are still retained by its writer:—"London, 20th March, 1880.—The copy of Turner's drawing of Fluelen, which has been just completed by Mr. Ward, and shown to me to-day, is beyond my best hopes in every desirable quality of execution; and is certainly as good as it is possible for care and skill to make it. I am so entirely satisfied with it that, for my own personal *pleasure*—irrespective of pride, I should feel scarcely any loss in taking it home with me instead of the original; and for all uses of artistic example or instruction, it is absolutely as good as the original.—JOHN RUSKIN."—The copy in question is from a drawing in the possession of Mr. Ruskin (see the Turner Notes, 1878, No. 70,) and was executed for its present proprietor, Mr. T. S. Kennedy, of Meanwoods, Leeds.

148, New Bond Street, are for sale. The drawings offered for sale by the company will, of course, be always made by Mr. Ward from the originals, just as much as those now exhibited as specimens.

You observe in the course of your article that "surely such attempts could not gratify any one who had a true insight for Mr. Turner's works?" But the reason that the drawings now at 148, New Bond Street, are not for sale, is that they *do* gratify *me*, and are among my extremely valued possessions; and if among the art critics on your staff there be, indeed, any one whose "insight for Mr. Turner's work" you suppose to be greater than mine, I shall have much pleasure in receiving any instructions with which he may favour me, at the National Gallery, on the points either in which Mr. Ward's work may be improved, or on those in which Turner is so superior to Titian and Correggio, that while the public maintain, in Italy, a nation of copyists of these second-rate masters, they are not justified in hoping any success whatever in representing the work of the Londoner, whom, while he was alive, I was always called mad for praising.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

JOHN RUSKIN.

PETERBOROUGH, *April* 23.

From 'The Times,' January 24, 1871.

'TURNERS,' FALSE AND TRUE.

To the Editor of 'The Times.'

Sir,—I have refused until now to express any opinion respecting the picture No. 40* in the Exhibition of the Old Masters, feeling extreme reluctance to say anything which its kind owner, to whom the Exhibition owes so much, might deem discourteous.

But I did not suppose it was possible any doubt could long exist among artists as to the character of the work in question; and, as I find its authenticity still in some quarters maintained, I think no other course is open to me than to state that the picture is not by Turner, nor even by an imitator of Turner acquainted with the essential qualities of the master.

I am able to assert this on internal evidence only. I never saw the picture before, nor do I know anything of the channels through which it came into the possession of its present proprietor.

No. 235 is, on the contrary, one of the most consummate and majestic works that ever came from the artist's hand, and it is one of the very few now remaining which have not been injured by subsequent treatment.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

JOHN RUSKIN.

DENMARK HILL, *Jan.* 23.

* 'Italy,' a reputed Turner, lent by the late Mr. Wynn Ellis. No. 235 was 'A Landscape,' with Cattle, in the possession of Lord Leconfield.

From 'The Life of Turner,' by Walter Thornbury.

THE CHARACTER OF TURNER.*

[The following admonition, sent by Mr. Ruskin in 1857 to Mr. Thornbury, and coupled with the advice that for the biographer of Turner there was no time to be lost, "for those who knew him when young are dying daily," forms a fit conclusion to this division of the letters.]

Fix at the beginning the following main characteristics of Turner in your mind, as the keys to the secret of all he said and did:—

Uprightness.
Generosity.
Tenderness of heart (extreme).
Sensuality.
Obstinacy (extreme).
Irritability.
Infidelity.

And be sure that he knew his own power, and felt himself utterly alone in the world from its not being understood. Don't try to mask the dark side. . . .

Yours most truly,

J. RUSKIN.

[See the preface to the first edition of the 'Life of Turner'; that to the second contains the following esti-

* See also 'Modern Painters,' vol. v. pp. 345—347, and 'Lectures on Architecture and Painting,' pp. 181—188, where the character of Turner is further explained, and various anecdotes given in special illustration of his truth, generosity, and kindness of heart.

mate of Mr. Thornbury's book:*—"Lucerne, Dec. 2, 1861.—I have just received and am reading your book with deep interest. I am much gratified by the view you have taken and give of Turner. It is quite what I hoped. What beautiful things you have discovered about him! Thank you for your courteous and far too flattering references to me."]

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* The book was also referred to in 'Modern Painters,' vol. v. p. 344, where Mr. Ruskin speaks of this 'Life of Turner,' then still unpublished, as being written "by a biographer, who will, I believe, spare no pains in collecting the few scattered records which exist of a career so uneventful and secluded."

LETTERS ON ART.

V.

PICTURES AND ARTISTS.

JOHN LEECH'S OUTLINES. 1872.
ERNEST GEORGE'S ETCHINGS. 1873.
THE FREDERICK WALKER EXHIBITION. 1876.

V.

PICTURES AND ARTISTS.

From the 'Catalogue of the Exhibition of Outlines by the late John Leech, at the Gallery, 9, Conduit Street, Regent Street.' 1872.*

JOHN LEECH'S OUTLINES.

I am honoured by the request of the sister of John Leech that I should give some account of the drawings of her brother, which remain in her possession; and I am able to fulfil her request without departing from the rule which has always bound me, not to allow any private interest to weigh with me in speaking of matters which concern the public. It is merely and simply a matter of public concern that the value of these drawings should be known and measures taken for their acquisition, or, at least, for obtaining a characteristic selection from them, as a National property. It cannot be necessary for me, or for any one now to praise the work of John Leech. Admittedly it contains the finest definition and natural history of the classes of our society, the kindest and subtlest analysis of its foibles, the

* Nearly eight years after Leech's death on October 29, 1864.

tenderest flattery of its pretty and well-bred ways, with which the modesty of subservient genius ever amused or immortalized careless masters. But it is not generally known how much more valuable, as art, the first sketches for the woodcuts were than the finished drawings, even before those drawings sustained any loss in engraving.

John Leech was an absolute master of the elements of character—but not by any means of those of *chiaroscuro*,—and the admirableness of his work diminished as it became elaborate. The first few lines in which he sets down his purpose are invariably of all drawing that I know the most wonderful in their accurate felicity and prosperous haste. It is true that the best possible drawing, whether slight or elaborate, is never hurried. Holbein or Titian, if they lay only a couple of lines, yet lay them quietly, and leave them entirely right. But it needs a certain sternness of temper to do this.

Most, in the prettiest sense of the word, *gentle* artists indulge themselves in the ease, and even trust to the felicity of rapid—and even in a measure inconsiderate—work in sketching, so that the beauty of a sketch is understood to be consistent with what is partly unintentional.

There is, however, one condition of extreme and exquisite skill in which haste may become unerring.

It cannot be obtained in completely finished work; but the hands of Gainsborough, Reynolds, or Tintoret often nearly approach completion at full speed, and the pencil sketches of Turner are expressive almost in the direct ratio of their rapidity.

But of all rapid and condensed realization ever accomplished by the pencil, John Leech's is the most dainty, and the least fallible, in the subjects of which he was cognizant. Not merely right in the traits which he seizes, but refined in the sacrifice of what he refuses.

The drawing becomes slight through fastidiousness not indolence, and the finest discretion has left its touches rare.

In flexibility and lightness of pencilling, nothing but the best outlines of Italian masters with the silver point can be compared to them. That Leech sketched English squires instead of saints, and their daughters instead of martyrs, does not in the least affect the question respecting skill of pencilling; and I repeat deliberately that nothing but the best work of sixteenth century Italy with the silver point exists in art, which in rapid refinement these playful English drawings do not excel. There are too many of them (fortunately) to be rightly exemplary —I want to see the collection divided, dated carefully, and selected portions placed in good light, in

a quite permanent arrangement in each of our great towns in connection with their drawing schools.

I will not indeed have any in Oxford while I am there, because I am afraid that my pupils should think too lightly of their drawing as compared with their other studies, and I doubt their studying anything else but John Leech if they had him to study. But in our servile schools of mechanical drawing, to see what drawing was indeed, which could represent something better than machines and could not be mimicked by any machinery, would put more life into them than any other teaching I can conceive.

It is, therefore, with the greatest pleasure that I accept the honour of having my name placed on the committee for obtaining funds for the purchase of these drawings; and I trust that the respect of the English public for the gentle character of the master, and their gratitude for the amusement with which he has brightened so many of their days, will be expressed in the only way in which expression is yet possible by due care and wise use of the precious possessions he has left to them.

(Signed) J. RUSKIN.

From 'The Architect,' December 27, 1873.

ERNEST GEORGE'S ETCHINGS.

To the Editor of 'The Architect.'

My dear Sir,—I am entirely glad you had permission to publish some of Mr. Ernest George's etchings;* they are the most precious pieces of work I have seen for many a day, though they are still, like nearly everything the English do best in art, faultful in matters which might have been easily conquered, and not a little wasteful, sometimes of means and time; I should be glad, therefore, of space enough in your columns to state, with reference to these sketches, some of the principles of etching which I had not time to define in the lectures on engraving I gave this year, at Oxford,†

* The number of the *Architect* in which this letter was printed contained two sketches from Mr. George's 'Etchings on the Mosel,'—those, viz., of the Elector's Palace, Coblentz, and of the interior of Metz Cathedral. The intention of the *Architect* to reproduce these etchings had apparently been previously communicated to Mr. Ruskin, who wrote the present letter for the issue in which the etchings were to be given. Mr. George has since published other works of the same kind—*e.g.*, 'Etchings in Belgium,' 'Etchings on the Loire' (see Mr. Ruskin's advice to him at the end of this letter, p. 169).

† The reference must, I think, be to 'Ariadne Florentina: Six Lectures on Wood and Metal Engraving given before the University of Oxford, Michaelmas Term, 1872,' and afterwards published, 1873-6. The lectures given in the year 1873 were upon Tuscan Art, now published in 'Val d'Arno.'

and which are too often forgotten even by our best draughtsmen.

I call Mr. George's work precious, chiefly because it indicates an intense perception of points of character in architecture, and a sincere enjoyment of them for their own sake. His drawings are not accumulative of material for future use; still less are they vain exhibitions of his own skill. He draws the scene in all its true relations, because it delights him, and he perceives what is permanently and altogether characteristic in it. As opposed to such frank and joyful work, most modern architectural drawings are mere diagram or exercise.

I call them precious, in the second place, because they show very great powers of true composition. All their subjects are made delightful more by skill of arrangement than by any dexterities of execution; and this faculty is very rare amongst landscape painters and architects, because nearly every man who has any glimmering of it naturally takes to figure painting—not that the ambition to paint figures is any sign of the faculty, but that, when people have the faculty, they nearly always have also the ambition. And, indeed, this is quite right, if they would not forsake their architecture afterwards, but apply their power of figure design, when gained, to the decoration of their buildings.

To return to Mr. George's work. It is precious, lastly, in its fine sense of serene light and shade, as opposed to the coruscations and horrors of modern attempts in that direction. But it is a pity—and this is the first grand principle of etching which I feel it necessary to affirm—when the instinct of chiaroscuro leads the artist to spend time in producing texture on his plate which cannot be ultimately perfect, however laboured. All the common raptures concerning blots, burr, delicate biting, and the other tricks of the etching trade, merely indicate imperfect feeling for shadow.

The proper instrument of chiaroscuro is the brush; a wash of sepia, rightly managed, will do more in ten minutes than Rembrandt himself could do in ten days of the most ingenious scratching, or blurt out by the most happy mixtures of art and accident.* As soon as Mr. George has learned what true light and shade is, (and a few careful studies with brush or chalk would enable him to do so,) he will not labour his etched subjects in vain. The

* The value of Rembrandt's etchings is always in the inverse ratio of the labour bestowed on them after his first thoughts have been decisively expressed; and even the best of his chiaroscuros (the spotted shell, for instance), are mere child's play compared to the disciplined light and shade of Italian masters.

virtue of an etching, in this respect, is to express perfectly harmonious sense of light and shade, but not to realize it. All fine etchings are done with few lines.

Secondly,—and this is a still more important general principle, (I must let myself fall into dictatorial terms for brevity's sake)—Let your few lines be sternly clear, however delicate, or however dark. All burr and botch is child's play, and a true draughtsman must never be at the mercy of his copper and ink. Drive your line well and fairly home; don't scrawl or zigzag; know where your hand is going, and what it is doing, to a hairsbreadth; then bite clear and clean, and let the last impression be as good as the first. When it begins to fail, break your plate.

Third general principle.

Don't depend much on various biting. For a true master, and a great purpose, even one biting is enough. By no flux or dilution of acid can you ever etch a curl of hair or a cloud; and if you think you can etch the gradations of coarser things, it is only because you have never seen them. Try, at your leisure, to etch a teacup or a tallow candle, of their real size; see what you can make of the gradations of those familiar articles; if you succeed to your mind, you may try something more difficult afterwards.

Lastly. For all definite shades of architectural detail, use pencil or charcoal, or the brush, never the pen point. You can draw a leaf surface rightly in a minute or two with these,—with the pen point, never, to all eternity. And on your knowing what the surface of a form is depends your entire power of recognizing good work. The difference between thirteenth-century work, wholly beautiful, and a cheap imitation of it, wholly damnable, lies in gradation of surface as subtle as those of a rose-leaf, and which are, to modern sculpture, what singing is to a steam-whistle.

For the rest, the limitation of etched work to few lines enables the sketcher to multiply his subjects, and make his time infinitely more useful to himself and others. I would most humbly solicit, in conclusion, such advantageous use of his gifts from Mr. George. He might etch a little summer tour for us every year, and give permanent and exquisite record of a score of scenes, rich in historical interest, with no more pains than he has spent on one or two of these plates in drawing the dark sides of a wall.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN RUSKIN.

From 'The Times,' January 20, 1876.

THE FREDERICK WALKER EXHIBITION.

Dear Mr. Marks,*—You ask me to say what I feel of Frederick Walker's work, now seen in some collective mass, as far as anything can be seen in black-veiled London. You have long known my admiration of his genius, my delight in many passages of his art. These, while he lived, were all I cared to express. If you will have me speak of him now, I will speak the whole truth of what I feel—namely, that every soul in London interested in art ought to go to see that Exhibition, and, amid all the beauty and the sadness of it, very diligently to try and examine themselves as to the share they have had, in their own busy modern life, in arresting the power of this man at the point where it stayed. Very chief share they have had, assuredly. But he himself, in the liberal and radical temper of modern youth, has had his own part in casting down his strength, following wantonly or obstinately his own fancies wherever they led him. For instance, it being Nature's opinion that sky should usually be

* This letter was written to Mr. H. Stacy Marks, A.R.A., in answer to a request that Mr. Ruskin would in some way record his impression of the Frederick Walker Exhibition, then open to the public. Frederick Walker died in June 1875, at the early age of thirty-five, only four years after having been elected an Associate of the Royal Academy.

blue, and it being Mr. Walker's opinion that it should be the colour of buff plaster, he resolutely makes it so, for his own isolated satisfaction, partly in affectation also, buff skies being considered by the public more sentimental than blue ones. Again, the laws of all good painting having been long ago determined by absolute masters, whose work cannot be bettered nor departed from—Titian having determined for ever what oil-painting is, Angelico what tempera-painting is, Perugino what fresco-painting is, two hundred years of noble miniature-painting what minutest work on ivory is, and, in modern times, a score of entirely skilful and disciplined draughtsmen what pure water-colour and pure body-colour painting on paper are, (Turner's Yorkshire drawing of Hornby Castle, now at Kensington, and John Lewis's 'Encampment under Sinai,'* being nameable at once as unsurpassable standards,) here is Mr. Walker refusing to learn anything from any of those schools or masters, but inventing a semi-miniature, quarter fresco, quarter wash manner of his own—exquisitely clever, and reaching, under such clever management, delightfullest results here and there, but which betrays his genius into per-

* The 'Hornby Castle' was executed, together with the rest of the "great Yorkshire series," for Whitaker's 'History of Richmondshire' (Longman, 1823).—The picture of John Lewis here alluded to is described in Mr. Ruskin's 'Academy Notes,' 1856, No. II., p. 37.

petual experiment instead of achievement, and his life into woful vacillation between the good, old, quiet room of the Water-Colour Society, and your labyrinthine magnificence at Burlington House.

Lastly, and in worst error, the libraries of England being full of true and noble books—her annals of true and noble history, and her traditions of beautiful and noble—in these scientific times I must say, I suppose, 'mythology'—not religion—from all these elements of mental education and subjects of serviceable art, he turns recklessly away to enrich the advertisements of the circulating library, to sketch whatever pleases his fancy, barefooted, or in dainty boots, of modern beggary and fashion, and enforce, with laboriously symbolical pathos, his adherence to Justice Shallow's sublime theology that 'all shall die.'

That theology has indeed been preached by stronger men, again and again, from Horace's days to our own, but never to so little purpose. 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die,' said wisely in his way, the Latin farmer: ate his beans and bacon in comfort, had his suppers of the gods on the fair earth, with his servants jesting round the table, and left eternal monuments of earthly wisdom and of cricket-song. 'Let us labour and be just, for to-morrow we die, and after death the Judgment,' said Holbein and Dürer, and left eternal monuments

of upright human toil and honourable gloom of godly fear. 'Let us rejoice and be exceeding glad, for to-morrow we die, and shall be with God,' said Angelico and Giotto, and left eternal monuments of divinely-blazoned heraldry of Heaven. 'Let us smoke pipes, make money, read bad novels, walk in bad air, and say sentimentally how sick we are in the afternoon, for to-morrow we die, and shall be made ourselves clay pipes,' says the modern world, and drags this poor bright painter down into the abyss with it, vainly clutching at a handful or two of scent and flowers in the May gardens.

Under which sorrowful terms, being told also by your grand Academicians that he should paint the nude, and, accordingly, wasting a year or two of his life in trying to paint schoolboys' backs and legs without their shirts or breeches, and with such other magazine material as he can pick up of sick gipsies, faded gentlewomen, pretty girls disguised as paupers, and the red-roofed or grey remnants of old English villages and manor-house, last wrecks of the country's peace and honour, remaining yet visible among the black ravages of its ruin, he supplies the demands of his temporary public, scarcely patient, even now that he has gone, to pause beside his delicate tulips or under his sharp-leaved willows, and repent for the passing tints and fallen petals of the life that might

have been so precious, and, perhaps, in better days, prolonged.

That is the main moral of the Exhibition. Of the beauty of the drawings, accepting them for what they aim at being, there is little need that I should add anything to what has been already said rightly by the chief organs of the London Press. Nothing can go beyond them in subtlety of exhibited touch (to be distinguished, however, observe always from the serene completion of master's work, disdaining the applause to be gained by its manifestation); their harmonies of amber-colour and purple are full of exquisite beauty in their chosen key; their composition always graceful, often admirable, and the sympathy they express with all conditions of human life most kind and true; not without power of rendering character which would have been more recognized in an inferior artist, because it would have been less restrained by the love of beauty.

I might, perhaps, in my days of youth and good fortune, have written what the public would have called 'eloquent passages' on the subjects of the Almshouse and the Old Gate;* being now myself

* The following are the pictures, as catalogued, mentioned here :—

1. 'The Almshouse'—No. 52—called 'The House of Refuge.' Oil on canvas. A garden and terrace in quadrangle of almshouses; on left an old woman and girl; on right a mower cutting grass. Exhibited R.A. 1872.

2. 'The Old Gate'—No. 48—oil on canvas. Lady in black and

old and decrepit, (besides being much bothered with beggars, and in perpetual feud with parish officers,) and having seen every building I cared for in the world ruined, I pass these two pictures somewhat hastily by, and try to enjoy myself a little in the cottage gardens. Only one of them, however,—No. 71—has right sunshine in it, and that is a sort of walled paddock where I begin directly to feel uncomfortable about the lamb, lest, perchance, some front shop in the cottages belong to a butcher. If only it and I could get away to a bit of thymy hill-side, we should be so much happier, leaving the luminous—perhaps too ideally luminous—child to adorn the pathetic paddock. I am too shy to speak to either of those two beautiful ladies among the lilies (37, 67), and take refuge among the shy children before the 'Chaplain's Daughter' (20)—delight-

servant with basket coming through the gate of old mansion; four children at play at foot of steps; two villagers and dog in foreground. Exhibited R.A. 1869.

3. 'The Cottage Gardens'—No. 71, 'The Spring of Life.' Water-colour. Lady in a garden with two children and a lamb; a cherry tree in blossom. Exhibited at the Water-Colour Society, Winter 1866-7. See also Nos. 14 and 21.

4. 'Ladies and Lilies'—No. 37, 'A Lady in a Garden, Perthshire,' Water-colour. A lady seated on a knoll on which is a sun-dial; greyhound on left; background, old manor-house. No. 67, 'Lilies.' Water-colour. Lady in a garden watering flowers, chiefly lilies. Exhibited at the Water-Colour Society, Winter 1869-70 and 1868-9 respectively.

5. 'The Chaplain's Daughter,' No. 20, subject from Miss Thackeray's

fullest, it seems to me, of the minor designs, and a piece of most true and wise satire. The sketches of the 'Daughter of Heth' go far to tempt me to read the novel; and, ashamed of this weakness, I retreat resolutely to the side of the exemplary young girl knitting in the 'Old Farm Garden' (33), and would instantly pick up her ball of worsted for her, but that I wouldn't for the world disappoint the cat. No drawing in the room is more delicately completed than this unpretending subject, and the flower-painting in it, for instantaneous grace of creative touch, cannot be rivalled; it is worth all the Dutch flower-pieces in the world.

Much instructed, and more humiliated, by passage after passage of its rapidly-grouped colour, I get finally away into the comfortable corner beside the salmon-fishers and the mushrooms; and the last-

'Jack the Giant-killer.' Exhibited at the Water-Colour Society, Summer 1868.

6. 'Daughter of Heth,' by W. Black. No. 87. 'Do ye no ken this is the Sabbath?' Young lady at piano; servant enters hurriedly. (Study in black and white, executed in 1872.)—[See vol. i. p. 41. "'Preserve us a', lassie, do ye ken what ye're doing? Do ye no ken that this is the Sabbath, and that you're in a respectable house?' The girl turned round with more wonder than alarm in her face: 'Is it not right to play music on Sunday?'"]—(No. 131. Three more studies for the same novel.)

7. 'The Old Farm Garden'—No. 33—Water-colour. A girl, with cat on lawn, knitting; garden path bordered by tulips; farm buildings in background. Painted in 1871.

8. 'Salmon-fishers'—No. 47—'Fisherman and Boy'—Water-colour.

named drawing, despise me who may, keeps me till I've no more time to stay, for it entirely beats my dear old William Hunt in the simplicity of its execution, and rivals him in the subtlest truth.

I say nothing of the 'Fishmonger's Stalls' (952), though there are qualities of the same kind in these also, for they somewhat provoke me by their waste of time—the labour spent on one of them would have painted twenty instructive studies of fish of their real size. And it is well for artists in general to observe that when they do condescend to paint still life carefully—whether fruit, fungi or fish—it must at least be of the real size. The portrait of a man or woman is only justifiably made small that it may be portable, and nobody wants to carry about the miniature of a cod; and if the reader will waste five minutes of his season in London in the National Gallery, he may see in the hand of Perugino's Tobias a fish worth all these on the boards together.

Keeper and boy on bank of river. Glen Spean. Salmon in foreground. Exhibited at the Water-Colour Society, Summer 1867.

9. Mushrooms and Fungi—No. 41—Water-colour. Painted in 1873.

10. 'Fishmonger's Stalls'—Nos. 9 and 62 (not 952)—viz., No. 9, 'A Fishmonger's Shop.' Water-colour. Painted in 1873; and No. 62, also 'A Fishmonger's Shop.' Water-colour. Fishmonger selling fish; lady and boy in costumes of about 1800. Exhibited at Water-Colour Society, Winter 1872-3. (The 'Tobias' of Perugino has been already alluded to, p. 64, note.)

11. No. 68. 'The Ferry.' Water-colour. Sight size, $11\frac{3}{4} \times 18$ in. A ferry boat, in which are two figures, a boatman and a lady, approach-

Some blame of the same kind attaches to the marvellous drawing No. 68. It is all very well for a young artist to show how much work he can put into an inch, but very painful for an old gentleman of fifty-seven to have to make out all the groups through a magnifying-glass. I could say something malicious about the boat, in consequence of the effect of this exertion on my temper, but will not, and leave with unqualified praise the remainder of the lesser drawings to the attention which each will variously reward.

Nor, in what I have already, it may be thought, too bluntly said, ought the friends of the noble artist to feel that I am unkind. It is because I know his real power more deeply than any of the admirers who give him indiscriminate applause, that I think it right distinctly to mark the causes which prevented his reaching heights they did not conceive, and ended by placing one more tablet in the street of tombs, which the passionate folly and uninstructed confusion of modern English society prolong into dark perspective above the graves of its youth.

I am, dear Marks, always very faithfully yours,

J. RUSKIN.

ing a landing-place; on the bank figures of villagers, and children feeding swans. Exhibited at Water-Colour Society, Winter 1870-71.

LETTERS ON ART.

VI.

ARCHITECTURE.

GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE AND THE OXFORD MUSEUM. 1858.

GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE AND THE OXFORD MUSEUM. 1859.

THE CASTLE ROCK (EDINBURGH). 1857 (SEPT. 14).

EDINBURGH CASTLE. 1857 (SEPT. 17).

CASTLES AND KENNELS. 1871 (DEC. 22).

VERONA *v.* WARWICK. 1871 (DEC. 24).

NOTRE DAME DE PARIS. 1871.

MR. RUSKIN'S INFLUENCE—A DEFENCE. 1872. (MARCH 15).

MR. RUSKIN'S INFLUENCE—A REJOINDER. 1872. (MARCH 21).

MODERN RESTORATION. 1877.

RIBBESFORD CHURCH. 1877.

CIRCULAR RELATING TO ST. MARK'S, VENICE. 1879.

VI.

ARCHITECTURE.

From 'The Oxford Museum,' by H. W. Acland and J. Ruskin. 1859. pp. 44—56.

GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE AND THE OXFORD MUSEUM.*

Dear Acland,

I have been very anxious, since I last heard from you, respecting the progress of the works at the Museum, as I thought I could trace in your expressions some doubt of an entirely satisfactory issue.

Entirely satisfactory very few issues are, or can be; and when the enterprise, as in this instance, involves the development of many new and progressive prin-

* In 1858 the Oxford Museum was in course of building, its architects being Sir Thomas Deane and Mr. Woodward, and its style modern Gothic, whilst amongst those chiefly interested in it were Dr. Acland (the Regius Professor of Medicine) and Mr. Ruskin. The present letter, written in June 1858, was read by Dr. Acland at a lecture given by him in that summer "to the members of the Architectural Societies that met in Oxford" at that time. I am permitted to reprint the following passage from Dr. Acland's preface to the printed lecture, as well as one or two passages from the lecture itself (see below, pp. 190 and 192) :—"Many have yet to learn the apparently simple truth, that to an Artist his Art is his means of probation in this life; and that, whatever it may have of frivolity to us, to him it is as the two or the

ciples, we must always be prepared for a due measure of disappointment—due partly to human weakness, and partly to what the ancients would have called fate—and we may, perhaps, most wisely call the law of trial, which forbids any great good being usually accomplished without various compensations and deductions, probably not a little humiliating.

Perhaps in writing to you what seems to me to be the bearing of matters respecting your Museum, I may be answering a few of the doubts of others, as well as fears of your own.

I am quite sure that when you first used your influence to advocate the claims of a Gothic design, you did so under the conviction, shared by all the seriously purposed defenders of the Gothic style, that the essence and power of Gothic, properly so called, lay in its adaptability to all need; in that perfect and unlimited flexibility which would enable the

five talents, to be accounted for hereafter. I might say much on this point, for the full scope of the word Art seems by some to be even now unrecognized. Before the period of printing, Art was the largest mode of permanently recording human thought; it was spoken in every epoch, in all countries, and delivered in almost every material. In buildings, on medals and coins, in porcelain and earthenware, on wood, ivory, parchment, paper and canvas, the graver or the pencil has recorded the ideas of every form of society, of every variety of race and of every character. What wonder that the Artist is jealous of his craft, and proud of his brotherhood?"—See 'The Oxford Museum,' p. 4. The reader is also referred to 'Sesame and Lilies,' 1871 ed., §§ 103-4.

architect to provide all that was required, in the simplest and most convenient way; and to give you the best offices, the best lecture-rooms, laboratories, and museums, which could be provided with the sum of money at his disposal.

So far as the architect has failed in doing this; so far as you find yourself, with the other professors, in anywise inconvenienced by forms of architecture; so far as pillars or piers come in your way, when you have to point, or vaults in the way of your voice, when you have to speak, or mullions in the way of your light, when you want to see;—just so far the architect has failed in expressing his own principles, or those of pure Gothic art. I do not suppose that such failure has taken place to any considerable extent; but so far as it has taken place, it cannot in justice be laid to the score of the style, since precedent has shown sufficiently, that very uncomfortable and useless rooms may be provided in all other styles as well as in Gothic; and I think if, in a building arranged for many objects of various kinds, at a time when the practice of architecture has been somewhat confused by the inventions of modern science, and is hardly yet organized completely with respect to the new means at his disposal; if, under such circumstances, and with somewhat limited funds, you have yet obtained a building in all main points

properly fulfilling its requirements, you have, I think, as much as could be hoped from the adoption of any style whatsoever.

But I am much more anxious about the decoration of the building; for I fear that it will be hurried in completion, and that, partly in haste and partly in mistimed economy, a great opportunity may be lost of advancing the best interest of architectural, and in that, of all other arts. For the principles of Gothic decoration, in themselves as simple and beautiful as those of Gothic construction, are far less understood, as yet, by the English public, and it is little likely that any effective measures can be taken to carry them out. You know, as well as I, what those principles are; yet it may be convenient to you that I should here state them briefly as I accept them myself, and have reason to suppose they are accepted by the principal promoters of the Gothic revival.

I. The first principle of Gothic decoration is that a given quantity of good art will be more generally useful when exhibited on a large scale, and forming part of a connected system, than when it is small and separated. That is to say, a piece of sculpture or painting, of a certain allowed merit, will be more useful when seen on the front of a building, or at the end of a room, and therefore by many persons, than if it be so small as to be only capable of being

seen by one or two at a time; and it will be more useful when so combined with other work as to produce that kind of impression usually termed 'sublime'—as it is felt on looking at any great series of fixed paintings, or at the front of a cathedral—than if it be so separated as to excite only a special wonder or admiration, such as we feel for a jewel in a cabinet.

The paintings by Meissonier in the French Exhibition of this year were bought, I believe, before the Exhibition opened, for 250 guineas each. They each represented one figure, about 6 inches high—one, a student reading; the other, a courtier standing in a dress-coat. Neither of these paintings conveyed any information, or produced any emotion whatever, except that of surprise at their minute and dextrous execution. They will be placed by their possessors on the walls of small private apartments, where they will probably, once or twice a week, form the subject of five minutes' conversation while people drink their coffee after dinner. The sum expended on these toys would have been amply sufficient to cover a large building with noble frescoes, appealing to every passer by, and representing a large portion of the history of any given period. But the general tendency of the European patrons of art is to grudge all sums spent in a way thus

calculated to confer benefit on the public, and to grudge none for minute treasures of which the principal advantage is that a lock and key can always render them invisible.

I have no hesitation in saying that an acquisitive selfishness, rejoicing somewhat even in the sensation of possessing what can NOT be seen by others, is at the root of this art-patronage. It is, of course, coupled with a sense of securer and more convenient investment in what may be easily protected and easily carried from place to place, than in large and immoveable works; and also with a vulgar delight in the minute curiosities of productive art, rather than in the exercise of inventive genius, or the expression of great facts or emotions.

The first aim of the Gothic Revivalists is to counteract, as far as possible, this feeling on all its three grounds. We desire (A) to make art large and publicly beneficial, instead of small and privately engrossed or secluded; (B) to make art fixed instead of portable, associating it with local character and historical memory; (C) to make art expressive instead of curious, valuable for its suggestions and teachings, more than for the mode of its manufacture.

II. The second great principle of the Gothic Revivalists is that all art employed in decoration should be informative, conveying truthful statements

about natural facts, if it conveys *any* statement. It may sometimes merely compose its decorations of mosaics, chequers, bosses, or other meaningless ornaments: but if it represents organic form, (and in all important places it *will* represent it,) it will give that form truthfully, with as much resemblance to nature as the necessary treatment of the piece of ornament in question will admit of.

This principle is more disputed than the first among the Gothic Revivalists themselves. I, however, hold it simply and entirely, believing that ornamentation is always, *cæteris paribus*, most valuable and beautiful when it is founded on the most extended knowledge of natural forms, and conveys continually such knowledge to the spectator.*

III. The third great principle of the Gothic Revival is that all architectural ornamentation should be executed by the men who design it, and should be of various degrees of excellence, admitting, and therefore exciting, the intelligent co-operation of various classes of workmen; and that a great public edifice should be, in sculpture and painting, somewhat the same as a great chorus of music, in which, while, perhaps, there may be only one or two voices perfectly trained, and of perfect sweetness, (the rest being in various degrees weaker and less cultivated,)

* See next letter, pp. 209 *seqq.*

yet all being ruled in harmony, and each sustaining a part consistent with its strength, the body of sound is sublime, in spite of individual weaknesses.

The Museum at Oxford was, I know, intended by its designer to exhibit in its decoration the working of these three principles; but in the very fact of its doing so, it becomes exposed to chances of occasional failure, or even to serious discomfitures, such as would not at all have attended the adoption of an established mode of modern work. It is easy to carve capitals on models known for four thousand years, and impossible to fail in the application of mechanical methods and formalized rules. But it is not possible to appeal vigorously to new canons of judgment without the chance of giving offence; nor to summon into service the various phases of human temper and intelligence, without occasionally finding the tempers rough and the intelligence feeble. The Oxford Museum is, I believe, the first building in this country which has had its ornamentation, in any telling parts, trusted to the invention of the workman: the result is highly satisfactory, the projecting windows of the staircases being as beautiful in effect as anything I know in civil Gothic: but far more may be accomplished for the building if the completion of its carving be not hastened; many men of high artistic power might be brought to

take an interest in it, and various lessons and suggestions given to the workmen which would materially advantage the final decoration of leading features. No very great Gothic building, so far as I know, was ever yet completed without some of this wise deliberation and fruitful patience.

I was in hopes from the beginning that the sculpture might have been rendered typically illustrative of the English Flora: how far this idea has been as yet carried out I do not know; but I know that it cannot be properly carried out without a careful examination of the available character of the principal genera, such as architects have not hitherto undertaken. The proposal which I heard advanced the other day, of adding a bold entrance-porch to the façade, appeared to me every way full of advantage, the blankness of the façade having been, to my mind, from the first, a serious fault in the design. If a subscription were opened for the purpose of erecting one, I should think there were few persons interested in modern art who would not be glad to join in forwarding such an object.

I think I could answer for some portions of the design being superintended by the best of our modern sculptors and painters; and I believe that, if so superintended, the porch might and would become the crowning beauty of the building, and

make all the difference between its being only a satisfactory and meritorious work, or a most lovely and impressive one.

The interior decoration is a matter of much greater difficulty; perhaps you will allow me to defer the few words I have to say about it till I have time for another letter: which, however, I hope to find speedily.

Believe me, my dear Acland,

Ever affectionately yours,

J. RUSKIN.*

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* After reading this letter to his audience, Dr. Acland thus continued:—"The principles thus clearly enumerated by Mr. Ruskin are, on the main, those that animate the earnest student of Gothic. It is not for me especially to advocate Gothic Art, but only to urge, that if called into life, it should be in conformity to its own proper laws of vitality. If week after week, in my youth, with fresh senses and a docile spirit, I have drank in each golden glow that is poured by a Mediterranean sun from over the blue Ægæan upon the Athenian Parthenon,—if, day by day, sitting on Mars' Hill, I have watched each purple shadow, as the temple darkened in majesty against the evening sky,—if so, it has been to teach me, as the alphabet of all Art, to love all truth and to hate all falsehood, and to kiss the hand of every Master who has brought down, under whatever circumstance, and in whatever age, one spark of true light from the Beauty and the subtle Law which stamps the meanest work of the Ever-living, Ever-working Artist."—('The Oxford Museum,' pp. 56-7.)

From 'The Oxford Museum,' pp. 60—90.

GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE AND THE OXFORD MUSEUM.

January 20, 1859.

My dear Acland,

I was not able to write, as I had hoped, from Switzerland, for I found it impossible to lay down any principles respecting the decoration of the Museum which did not in one way or other involve disputed points, too many, and too subtle, to be discussed in a letter. Nor do I feel the difficulty less in writing to you now, so far as regards the question occurring in our late conversations, respecting the best mode of completing these interior decorations. Yet I must write, if only to ask that I may be in some way associated with you in what you are now doing to bring the Museum more definitely before the public mind—that I may be associated at least in the expression of my deep sense of the noble purpose of the building—of the noble sincerity of effort in its architect—of the endless good which the teachings to which it will be devoted must, in their ultimate issue, accomplish for mankind. How vast the range of that issue, you have shown in the lecture which I have just read, in which you have so admirably

traced the chain of the physical sciences as it encompasses the great concords of this visible universe.* But how deep the workings of these new springs of knowledge are to be—and how great our need of them—and how far the brightness and the beneficence of them are to reach among all the best interests of men—perhaps none of us can yet conceive, far less know or say. For, much as I reverence physical science as a means of mental education, (and you know how I have contended for it, as such, now these twenty years, from the sunny afternoon of spring when Ehrenberg, and

* See 'The Oxford Museum,' pp. 17—23. The following is a portion of the passage alluded to:—"Without the Geologist on one side, and the Anatomist and Physiologist on the other, Zoology is not worthy of its name. The student of life, bearing in mind the more general laws which in the several departments above named he will have sought to appreciate, will find in the collections of Zoology, combined with the Geological specimens and the dissections of the Anatomist, a boundless field of interest and of inquiry, to which almost every other science lends its aid: from each science he borrows a special light to guide him through the ranges of extinct and existing animal forms, from the lowest up to the highest types, which, last and most perfect, but preshadowed in previous ages, is seen in Man. By the aid of physiological illustrations he begins to understand how hard to unravel are the complex mechanisms and prescient intentions of the Maker of all; and he slowly learns to appreciate what exquisite care is needed for discovering the real action of even an apparently comprehended machine. And so at last, almost bewildered, but not cast down, he attempts to scrutinize in the rooms devoted to Medicine, the various injuries which man is doomed to undergo in his progress towards death; he begins to revere the beneficent contrivances which shine forth in the midst of suffering and

you, and I, went hunting for infusoria in Christ-church meadow streams, to the hour when the prize offered by Sir Walter Trevelyan and yourself for the best essay on the Fauna of that meadow, marked the opening of a new era in English education*)—much, I say, as I reverence physical science in this function, I reverence it, at this moment, more as the source of utmost human practical power, and the means by which the far-distant races of the world, who now sit in darkness and the shadow of death, are to be reached and regenerated. At home or far away—the call is equally instant—here, for want of more extended physical science, there is plague in

disease, and to veil his face before the mysterious alterations of structure, to which there seem attached pain, with scarce relief, and a steady advance, without a check, to death. He will look, and as he looks, will cherish hope, not unmixed with prayer, that the great Art of Healing may by all these things advance, and that by the progress of profounder science, by the spread among the people of the resultant practica knowledge, by stricter obedience to physiological laws, by a consequent more self-denying spirit, some disorders may at a future day be cured, which cannot be prevented, and some, perhaps, prevented, which never can be cured."

* Christian Gottfried Ehrenberg, the naturalist and author of many works, of which those on infusoria may be especially noted here. He was born in 1795, and in 1842 was elected Principal Secretary to the Berlin Academy of Science, which post he held till his death in 1876. The late Sir Walter Calverley Trevelyan, Bart., will also be remembered in connection with the study of natural science, as well as for his efforts in philanthropy. He died in March, 1879. I have been unable to find any further information as to the prize mentioned by Mr. Ruskin, or as to the essay which obtained it.

our streets, famine in our fields; the pest strikes root and fruit over a hemisphere of the earth, we know not why; the voices of our children fade away into silence of venomous death, we know not why; the population of this most civilized country resists every effort to lead it into purity of habit and habitation,—to give it genuineness of nourishment, and wholesomeness of air, as a new interference with its liberty; and insists vociferously on its right to helpless death. All this is terrible; but it is more terrible yet that dim, phosphorescent, frightful superstitions still hold their own over two-thirds of the inhabited globe, and that all the phenomena of nature which were intended by the Creator to enforce His eternal laws of love and judgment, and which, rightly understood, enforce them more strongly by their patient beneficence, and their salutary destructiveness, than the miraculous dew on Gideon's fleece, or the restrained lightnings of Horeb—that all these legends of God's daily dealing with His creatures remain unread, or are read backwards, into blind, hundred-armed horror of idol cosmogony.

How strange it seems that physical science should ever have been thought adverse to religion! The pride of physical science is, indeed, adverse, like every other pride, both to religion and truth; but sincerity of science, so far from being hostile, is the

path-maker among the mountains for the feet of those who publish peace.

Now, therefore, and now only, it seems to me, the University has become complete in her function as a teacher of the youth of the nation to which every hour gives wider authority over distant lands; and from which every rood of extended dominion demands new, various, and variously applicable knowledge of the laws which govern the constitution of the globe, and must finally regulate the industry, no less than discipline the intellect, of the human race. I can hardly turn my mind from these deep causes of exultation to the minor difficulties which beset or restrict your undertaking. The great work is accomplished; the immediate impression made by it is of little importance; and as for my own special subjects of thought or aim, though many of them are closely involved in what has been done, and some principles which I believe to be, in their way, of great importance, are awkwardly compromised in what has been imperfectly done,—all these I am tempted to waive, or content to compromise, when only I know that the building is in main points fit for its mighty work. Yet you will not think that it was matter of indifference to me when I saw, as I went over Professor Brodie's *

* Mr. Brodie, who succeeded his father as Sir Benjamin Brodie in 1867, was appointed Professor of Chemistry at Oxford in 1855.

chemical laboratories the other day, how closely this success of adaptation was connected with the choice of the style. It was very touching and wonderful to me. Here was the architecture which I had learned to know and love in pensive ruins, deserted by the hopes and efforts of men, or in dismantled fortress-fragments recording only their cruelty ;—here was this very architecture lending itself, as if created only for these, to the foremost activities of human discovery, and the tenderest functions of human mercy. No other architecture, as I felt in an instant, could have thus adapted itself to a new and strange office. No fixed arrangements of frieze and pillar, nor accepted proportions of wall and roof, nor practised refinement of classical decoration, could have otherwise than absurdly and fantastically yielded its bed to the crucible, and its blast to the furnace ; but these old vaultings and strong buttresses—ready always to do service to man, whatever his bidding—to shake the waves of war back from his seats of rock, or prolong through faint twilights of sanctuary, the sighs of his superstition—he had but to ask it of them, and they entered at once into the lowliest ministries of the arts of healing, and the sternest and clearest offices in the service of science.

And the longer I examined the Museum arrange-

ments, the more I felt that it could be only some accidental delay in the recognition of this efficiency for its work which had caused any feeling adverse to its progress among the members of the University The general idea about the Museum has perhaps been, hitherto, that it is a forced endeavour to bring decorative forms of architecture into uncongenial uses—whereas, the real fact is, as far as I can discern it, that no other architecture would, under the required circumstances, have been *possible;* and that any effort to introduce classical types of form into these laboratories and museums must have ended in ludicrous discomfiture. But the building has now reached a point of crisis, and it depends upon the treatment which its rooms now receive in completion, whether the facts of their propriety and utility be acknowledged by the public, or lost sight of in the distraction of their attention to matters wholly external.

So strongly I feel this, that, whatever means of decoration had been at your disposal, I should have been inclined to recommend an exceeding reserve in that matter. Perhaps I should even have desired such reserve on abstract grounds of feeling. The study of Natural History is one eminently addressed to the active energies of body and mind. Nothing is to be got out of it by dreaming, not always much

by thinking,—everything by seeking and seeing. It is work for the hills and fields—work of foot and hand, knife and hammer,—so far as it is to be afterwards carried on in the house, the more active and workmanlike our proceedings the better, fresh air blowing in from the windows, and nothing interfering with the free space for our shelves and instruments on the walls. I am not sure that much interior imagery or colour, or other exciting address to any of the observant faculties, would be desirable under such circumstances. You know best; but I should no more think of painting in bright colours beside you, while you were dissecting or analyzing, than of entertaining you by a concert of fifes and cymbals.

But farther—do you suppose Gothic decoration is an easy thing, or that it is to be carried out with a certainty of success at the first trial, under new and difficult conditions? The system of the Gothic decorations took eight hundred years to mature, gathering its power by undivided inheritance of traditional method, and unbroken accession of systematic power; from its culminating point in the Sainte Chapelle, it faded through four hundred years of splendid decline; now for two centuries it has lain dead—and more than so—buried; and more than so, forgotten, as a dead man out of mind; do

you expect to revive it out of those retorts and furnaces of yours, as the cloud-spirit of the Arabian sea rose from beneath the seals of Solomon? Perhaps I have been myself faultfully answerable for this too eager hope in your mind (as well as in that of others) by what I have urged so often respecting the duty of bringing out the power of subordinate workmen in decorative design. But do you think I meant workmen trained (or untrained) in the way that ours have been until lately, and then cast loose on a sudden, into unassisted contentions with unknown elements of style? I meant the precise contrary of this; I meant workmen as we have yet to create them: men inheriting the instincts of their craft through many generations, rigidly trained in every mechanical art that bears on their materials, and familiarized from infancy with every condition of their beautiful and perfect treatment; informed and refined in manhood, by constant observation of all natural fact and form; then classed, according to their proved capacities, in ordered companies, in which every man shall know his part, and take it calmly and without effort or doubt—indisputably well,—unaccusably accomplished—mailed and weaponed *cap-à-pie* for his place and function. Can you lay your hand on such men? or do you think that mere natural good-will and good-feeling can at once

supply their place? Not so—and the more faithful and earnest the minds you have to deal with, the more careful you should be not to urge them towards fields of effort, in which, too early committed, they can only be put to unserviceable defeat.

Nor can you hope to accomplish by rule or system what cannot be done by individual taste. The laws of colour are definable up to certain limits, but they are not yet defined. So far are they from definition, that the last, and, on the whole, best work on the subject (Sir Gardner Wilkinson's) declares the "colour concords" of preceding authors to be discords, and *vice versâ*.*

Much, therefore, as I love colour decoration when it is rightly given, and essential as it has been felt by the great architects of all periods to the completion of their work, I would not, in your place, endeavour to carry out such decoration at present, in any elaborate degree, in the interior of the Museum. Leave it for future thought; above all, try no experiments. Let small drawings be made of the proposed arrangements of colour in every room; have them altered on the paper till you feel they are right; then carry them out firmly and simply; but, observe, with as delicate execution

* Sir Gardner Wilkinson's book 'On Colour and the Diffusion of Taste' was published in 1858.

as possible. Rough work is good in its place, three hundred feet above the eye, on a cathedral front, but not in the interior of rooms, devoted to studies in which everything depends upon accuracy of touch and keenness of sight.

With respect to this finishing, by the last touches bestowed on the *sculpture* of the building, I feel painfully the harmfulness of any ill-advised parsimony at this moment. For it may, perhaps, be alleged by the advocates of retrenchment, that so long as the building is fit for its uses (and your report is conclusive as to its being so), economy in treatment of external feature is perfectly allowable, and will in nowise diminish the serviceableness of the building in the great objects which its designs regarded. To a certain extent this is true. You have comfortable rooms, I hope sufficient apparatus; and it now depends much more on the professors than on the ornaments of the building, whether or not it is to become a bright or obscure centre of public instruction. Yet there are other points to be considered. As the building stands at present, there is a discouraging aspect of parsimony about it. One sees that the architect has done the utmost he could with the means at his disposal, and that just at the point of reaching what was right, he has been stopped for want of funds. This is visible

in almost every stone of the edifice. It separates it with broad distinctiveness from all the other buildings in the University. It may be seen at once that our other public institutions, and all our colleges—though some of them simply designed—are yet *richly* built, never pinchingly. Pieces of princely costliness, every here and there, mingle among the simplicities or severities of the student's life. What practical need, for instance, have we at Christchurch of the beautiful fan-vaulting under which we ascend to dine? We might have as easily achieved the eminence of our banquets under a plain vault. What need have the readers in the Bodleian of the ribbed traceries which decorate its external walls? Yet, which of those readers would not think that learning was insulted by their removal? And are there any of the students of Balliol devoid of gratitude for the kindly munificence of the man who gave them the beautiful sculptured brackets of their oriel window, when three massy projecting stones would have answered the purpose just as well? In these and also other regarded and pleasant portions of our colleges, we find always a wealthy and worthy completion of all appointed features, which I believe is not without strong, though untraced effect, on the minds of the younger scholars, giving them respect for the branches of

learning which these buildings are intended to honour, and increasing, in a certain degree, that sense of the value of delicacy and accuracy which is the first condition of advance in those branches of learning themselves.

Your Museum, if you now bring it to hurried completion, will convey an impression directly the reverse of this. It will have the look of a place, not where a revered system of instruction is established, but where an unadvised experiment is being disadvantageously attempted. It is yet in your power to avoid this, and to make the edifice as noble in aspect as in function. Whatever chance there may be of failure in interior work, rich ornamentation may be given, without any chance of failure, to just that portion of the exterior which will give pleasure to every passer-by, and express the meaning of the building best to the eyes of strangers. There is, I repeat, no chance of serious failure in this external decoration, because your architect has at his command the aid of men, such as worked with the architects of past times. Not only has the art of Gothic sculpture in part remained, though that of Gothic colour has been long lost, but the unselfish—and, I regret to say, in part self-sacrificing—zeal of two first-rate sculptors, Mr. Munro and Mr. Woolner, which has already given you a

series of noble statues, is still at your disposal, to head and systematize the efforts of inferior workmen.

I do not know if you will attribute it to a higher estimate than yours of the genius of the O'Shea family,* or to a lower estimate of what they have as yet accomplished, that I believe they will, as they proceed, produce much better ornamental sculpture than any at present completed in the Museum. It is also to be remembered that sculptors are able to work for us with a directness of meaning which none of our painters could bring to their task, even were they disposed to help us. A painter is scarcely excited to his strength, but by subjects full of circumstance, such as it would be difficult to suggest appropriately in the present building; but a sculptor has room enough for his full power in the portrait statues, which are necessarily the leading features of good Gothic decoration. Let me pray you, therefore, so far as you have influence with the delegacy, to entreat their favourable consideration of the project stated in Mr. Greswell's appeal,—the enrichment of the doorway, and the completion of the sculpture of the West Front. There is a reason for desiring such a plan to be carried out, of wider reach than any bearing on the interests of the Museum itself. I believe

* See note to p. 208.

that the elevation of all arts in England to their true dignity, depends principally on our recovering that unity of purpose in sculptors and architects, which characterized the designers of all great Christian buildings. Sculpture, separated from architecture, always degenerates into effeminacies and conceits ; architecture, stripped of sculpture, is at best a convenient arrangement of dead walls ; associated, they not only adorn, but reciprocally exalt each other, and give to all the arts of the country in which they thus exist, a correspondent tone of majesty.

But I would plead for the enrichment of this doorway by portrait sculpture, not so much even on any of these important grounds, as because it would be the first example in modern English architecture of the real value and right place of commemorative statues. We seem never to know at present where to put such statues. In the midst of the blighted trees of desolate squares, or at the crossings of confused streets, or balanced on the pinnacles of pillars, or riding across the tops of triumphal arches, or blocking up the aisles of cathedrals,—in none of these positions, I think, does the portrait statue answer its purpose. It may be a question whether the erection of such statues is honourable to the erectors, but assuredly it is not

honourable to the persons whom it pretends to commemorate; nor is it any wise matter of exultation to a man who has deserved well of his country, to reflect that he may one day encumber a crossing, or disfigure a park gate. But there is no man of worth or heart, who would not feel it a high and priceless reward that his statue should be placed where it might remind the youth of England of what had been exemplary in his life, or useful in his labours, and might be regarded with no empty reverence, no fruitless pensiveness, but with the emulative, eager, unstinted passionateness of honour, which youth pays to the dead leaders of the cause it loves, or discoverers of the light by which it lives. To be buried under weight of marble, or with splendour of ceremonial, is still no more than burial; but to be remembered daily, with profitable tenderness, by the activest intelligences of the nation we have served, and to have power granted even to the shadows of the poor features, sunk into dust, still to warn, to animate, to command, as the father's brow rules and exalts the toil of his children. This is not burial, but immortality.

There is, however, another kind of portraiture, already richly introduced in the works of the Museum; the portraiture, namely, of flowers and animals, respecting which I must ask you to let

me say a few selfish, no less than congratulatory words:—selfish, inasmuch as they bear on this visible exposition of a principle which it has long been one of my most earnest aims to maintain. We English call ourselves a practical people; but, nevertheless, there are some of our best and most general instincts which it takes us half-centuries to put into practice. Probably no educated Englishman or Englishwoman has ever, for the last forty years, visited Scotland, with leisure on their hands, without making a pilgrimage to Melrose; nor have they ever, I suppose, accomplished the pilgrimage without singing to themselves the burden of Scott's description of the Abbey. Nor in that description (may it not also be conjectured?) do they usually feel any couplets more deeply than the—

> "Spreading herbs and flowerets bright
> Glistened with the dew of night.
> No herb nor floweret glistened there
> But was carved in the cloister arches as fair."

And yet, though we are raising every year in England new examples of every kind of costly and variously intended buildings,—ecclesiastical, civil, and domestic,—none of us, through all that period, had boldness enough to put the pretty couplets into simple practice. We went on, even in the best Gothic work we attempted, clumsily copying the

rudest ornaments of previous buildings; we never so much as dreamed of learning from the monks of Melrose, and seeking for help beneath the dew that sparkled on their "gude kail" garden.*

Your Museum at Oxford is literally the first building raised in England since the close of the fifteenth century, which has fearlessly put to new trial this old faith in nature, and in the genius of the unassisted workman, who gathered out of nature the materials he needed. I am entirely glad, therefore, that you have decided on engraving for publication one of O'Shea's capitals;† it will be a complete type of the whole work, in its inner meaning, and far better to show one of them in its completeness, than to give any reduced sketch of the building. Nevertheless, beautiful as that capital is, and as all the rest of O'Shea's work is likely to be, it is not yet perfect Gothic sculpture; and it might give rise

* "The monks of Melrose made good kail
On Friday, when they fasted."

The kail leaf is the one principally employed in the decorations of the abbey. (Original note to 'The Oxford Museum,' p. 83.)

† This engraving, which formed the frontispiece of 'The Oxford Museum,' will be found facing the title-page of the present volume, the original plate having proved in excellent condition. O'Shea was, together with others of his name and family, amongst the principal workmen on the building. The capital represents the following ferns: the common hart's-tongue (scolopendrium vulgare), the northern hard-fern (blechnum boreale), and the male fern (filix mas).

to dangerous error, if the admiration given to these carvings were unqualified.

I cannot, of course, enter in this letter into any discussion of the question, more and more vexed among us daily, respecting the due meaning and scope of conventionalism in treatment of natural form; but I may state briefly what, I trust, will be the conclusion to which all this "vexing" will at last lead our best architects.

The highest art in all kinds is that which conveys the most truth; and the best ornamentation possible would be the painting of interior walls with frescoes by Titian, representing perfect Humanity in colour; and the sculpture of exterior walls by Phidias, representing perfect Humanity in form. Titian and Phidias are precisely alike in their conception and treatment of nature—everlasting standards of the right.

Beneath ornamentation, such as men like these could bestow, falls in various rank, according to its subordination to vulgar uses or inferior places, what is commonly conceived as ornamental art. The lower its office, and the less tractable its material, the less of nature it should contain, until a zigzag becomes the best ornament for the hem of a robe, and a mosaic of bits of glass the best design for a coloured window. But all these

forms of lower art are to be conventional only because they are subordinate:—not because conventionalism is in itself a good or desirable thing. All right conventionalism is a wise acceptance of, and compliance with, conditions of restraint or inferiority;—it may be inferiority of our knowledge or power—as in the art of a semi-savage nation; or restraint by reason of material—as in the way the glass painter should restrict himself to transparent hue, and a sculptor deny himself the eyelash and the film of flowing hair, which he cannot cut in marble;—but in all cases whatever, right conventionalism is either a wise acceptance of an inferior place, or a noble display of power under accepted limitation: it is *not* an improvement of natural form into something better or purer than Nature herself.

Now this great and most precious principle may be compromised in two quite opposite ways. It is compromised on one side when men suppose that the degradation of a natural form which fits it for some subordinate place is an improvement of it; and that a black profile on a red ground, because it is proper on a water-jug, is therefore an idealization of Humanity, and nobler art than a picture of Titian. And it is compromised equally gravely on the opposite side, when men refuse to submit to the limitation of material and the fitnesses of office;—

when they try to produce finished pictures in coloured glass, or substitute the inconsiderate imitation of natural objects for the perfectness of adapted and disciplined design.

There is a tendency in the work of the Oxford Museum to err on this last side; unavoidable, indeed, in the present state of our art-knowledge—and less to be regretted in a building devoted to natural science than in any other: nevertheless, I cannot close this letter without pointing it out, and warning the general reader against supposing that the ornamentation of the Museum is, or can be as yet, a representation of what Gothic work will be, when its revival is complete. Far more severe, yet more perfect and lovely, that work will involve, under sterner conventional restraint, the expression not only of natural form, but of all vital and noble natural law. For the truth of decoration is never to be measured by its imitative power, but by its suggestive and informative power. In the annexed spandril of the iron-work of our roof, for instance, the horse-chesnut leaf and nut are used as the principal elements of form; they are not ill-arranged, and produce a more agreeable effect than convolutions of the iron could have given, unhelped by any reference to natural objects. Nevertheless, I do not call it an absolutely good design; for it would

have been possible, with far severer conventional

(From 'The Oxford Museum, p. 89.)

treatment of the iron bars, and stronger constructive arrangement of them, to have given vigorous expres-

sion, not of the shapes of leaves and nuts only, but of their peculiar radiant or fanned expansion, and other conditions of group and growth in the tree; which would have been just the more beautiful and interesting, as they would have arisen from deeper research into nature, and more adaptive modifying power in the designer's mind, than the mere leaf termination of a riveted scroll.

I am compelled to name these deficiencies, in order to prevent misconception of the principles we are endeavouring to enforce; but I do not name them as at present to be avoided, or even much to be regretted. They are not chargeable either on the architect, or on the subordinate workmen; but only on the system which has for three centuries withheld all of us from healthy study; and although I doubt not that lovelier and juster expressions of the Gothic principle will be ultimately aimed at by us, than any which are possible in the Oxford Museum, its builders will never lose their claim to our chief gratitude, as the first guides in a right direction; and the building itself—the first exponent of the recovered truth—will only be the more venerated the more it is excelled.

Believe me, my dear Acland,

Ever affectionately yours,

J. RUSKIN.

From 'The Witness' (Edinburgh), September 16, 1857.

THE CASTLE ROCK.

To the Editor of 'The Witness.'

DUNBAR, 14*th September*, 1857.

My dear Sir,—As I was leaving Edinburgh this morning, I heard a report which gave me more concern than I can easily express, and very sufficiently spoiled the pleasure of my drive here. If there be no truth in the said report, of course take no notice of this letter; but if there be real ground for my fears, I trust you will allow me space in your columns for a few words on the subject.

The whisper—I hope I may say, the calumny—regarded certain proceedings which are taking place at the Castle. It was said to be the architect's intention to cut down into the brow of the Castle rock, in order to afford secure foundation for some new buildings.*

Now, the Castle rock of Edinburgh is, as far as I know, simply the noblest in Scotland conveniently approachable by any creatures but sea-gulls or peewits. Ailsa and the Bass are of course more wonderful; and, I suppose, in the West Highlands there are masses of crag more wild and fantastic;

* A new armoury was to be added to the Castle.

but people only go to see these once or twice in their lives, while the Castle Rock has a daily influence in forming the taste, or kindling the imagination, of every promising youth in Edinburgh. Even irrespectively of its position, it is a mass of singular importance among the rocks of Scotland. It is not easy to find among your mountains a "craig" of so definite a form, and on so magnificent a scale. Among the central hills of Scotland, from Ben Wyvis to the Lammermuirs, I know of none comparable to it; while, besides being bold and vast, its bars of basalt are so nobly arranged, and form a series of curves at once so majestic and harmonious, from the turf at their base to the roots of the bastions, that, as long as your artists have that crag to study, I do not see that they need casts from Michael Angelo, or any one else, to teach them the laws of composition or the sources of sublimity.

But if you once cut into the brow of it, all is over. Disturb, in any single point, the simple lines in which the walls now advance and recede upon the tufted grass of its summit, and you may as well make a quarry of it at once, and blast away rock, Castle, and all. It admits of some question whether the changes made in the architecture of your city of late years are in every case improve-

ments; but very certainly you cannot improve the architecture of your volcanic crags by any explosive retouches. And your error will be wholly irremediable. You may restore Trinity Chapel, or repudiate its restoration, at your pleasure, but there will be no need to repudiate restoration of the Castle rock. You cannot re-face nor re-rivet that, nor order another in a "similar style." It is a dangerous kind of engraving which you practise on so large a jewel. But I trust I am wasting my time in writing of this: I cannot believe the report, nor think that the people of Edinburgh, usually so proud of their city, are yet so unaware of what constitutes its chief nobleness, and so utterly careless of the very features of its scenery, which have been the means of the highest and purest education to their greatest men, as to allow this rock to be touched. If the works are confined to the inside of the wall, no harm will be done; but let a single buttress, or a single cleft, encumber or divide its outer brow, and there is not a man of sensibility or sense in Edinburgh who will not blush and grieve for it as long as he lives.

Believe me, my dear Sir, very faithfully yours,

J. RUSKIN.

From 'The Witness' (Edinburgh), September 30, 1857.

EDINBURGH CASTLE.

To the Editor of 'The Witness.'

PENRITH, *27th September.*

My dear Sir,—I see by some remarks in the *Literary Gazette* * on the letter of mine to which you gave a place in your columns of the 16th, that the design of the proposed additions to Edinburgh Castle is receiving really serious consideration. Perhaps, therefore, a few words respecting the popular but usually unprofitable business of castle-building may be of some interest to your readers. We are often a little confused in our ideas respecting the nature of a castle—properly so called. A "castle" is a fortified dwelling-house containing accommodation for as many retainers as are needed completely to defend its position. A "fortress" is a fortified military position, generally understood to be extensive enough to contain large bodies of troops. And a "citadel," a fortified military position connected with a fortified town, and capable of holding out even if the town were taken.

* The *Literary Gazette* of September 26, 1857, after quoting a great part of the previous letter, stated that the new armoury was not to be built without all due regard to the preservation of the rock, and that there was therefore no real cause for alarm.

It is as well to be clear on these points: for certain conditions of architecture are applicable and beautiful in each case, according to the use and character of the building; and certain other conditions are in like manner inapplicable and ugly, because contrary to its character, and unhelpful to its use.

Now this helpfulness and unhelpfulness in architectural features depends, of course, primarily on the military practice of the time; so that forms which were grand, because rational, before gunpowder was invented, are ignoble, because ridiculous, in days of shell and shot. The very idea and possibility of the castle proper have passed away with the arms of the middle ages. A man's house might be defended by his servants against a troop of cavalry, if its doors were solid and its battlements pierced. But it cannot be defended against a couple of field-pieces, whatever the thickness of its oak, or number of its arrow-slits.

I regret, as much as any one can regret, the loss of castellated architecture properly so called. Nothing can be more noble or interesting than the true thirteenth or fourteenth century castle, when built in a difficult position, its builder taking advantage of every inch of ground to gain more room, and of every irregularity of surface for purposes of

outlook and defence; so that the castle *sate* its rock as a strong rider sits his horse,—fitting its limbs to every writhe of the flint beneath it; and fringing the mountain promontory far into the sky with the wild crests of its fantastic battlements. Of such castles we can see no more; and it is just because I know them well and love them deeply that I say so. I know that their power and dignity consists, just as a soldier's consists, in their knowing and doing their work thoroughly; in their being advanced on edge or lifted on peak of crag, not for show nor pride, but for due guard and outlook; and that all their beautiful irregularities and apparent caprices of form are in reality their fulfilments of need, made beautiful by their compelled association with the wild strength and grace of the natural rock. All attempts to imitate them now are useless,—mere girl's play. Mind, I like girl's play, and child's play, in its place, but not in the planning of military buildings. Child's play in many cases is the truest wisdom. I accept to the full the truth of those verses of Wordsworth's* beginning—

* 'Poems of the Fancy,' xiv. (1803). The quotation omits two lines after the fourth :—

> "Who loved the little rock, and set
> Upon its head this coronet?"

The second stanza then begins, "Was it the humour of a child?" etc.

> "Who fancied what a pretty sight
> This rock would be, if edged around
> With living snowdrops?—circlet bright!
> How glorious to this orchard ground!
> Was it the humour of a child?" etc.

But I cannot apply the same principles to more serious matters, and vary the reading of the verses into application to the works on Edinburgh Castle, thus :—

> "Who fancied what a pretty sight
> This rock would be, if edged around
> With tiny turrets, pierced and light,
> How glorious to this warlike ground!"

Therefore, though I do not know exactly what you have got to do in Edinburgh Castle, whatever it may be, I am certain the only right way to do it is the *plain* way. Build what is needed, —chapel, barracks, or dwelling-house,—in the best places, in a military point of view, of dark stone, and bomb-proof, keeping them low, and within the existing line of ramparts. That is the rational thing to do; and the inhabitants of Edinburgh will find it in the end the picturesque thing. It would be so under any circumstances; but it is especially so in this instance; for the grandeur of Edinburgh Castle depends eminently on the great, unbroken, yet beautifully varied parabolic curve in which it descends from the Round Tower on the Castle Hill

to the terminating piece of impendent precipice on the north. It is the last grand feature of Edinburgh left as yet uninjured. You have filled up your valley with a large chimney, a Mound, and an Institution; broken in upon the Old Town with a Bank, a College, and several fires; dwarfed the whole of Princes Street by the Scott Monument; and cut Arthur's Seat in half by the Queen's Drive. It only remains for you to spoil the curve of your Castle, and your illustrations of the artistic principle of breadth will be complete.

It may appear at first that I depart from the rule of usefulness I have proposed, in entreating for the confinement of all buildings undertaken within the existing ramparts, in order to preserve the contour of the outside rock. But I presume that in the present state of military science, and of European politics, Edinburgh Castle is not a very important military position; and that to make it a serviceable fortress or citadel, many additional works would be required, seriously interfering with the convenience of the inhabitants of the New Town, and with the arrangements of the Railroad Company. And, as long as these subordinate works are not carried out, I do not see any use in destroying your beautiful rock, merely to bring another gun to bear, or give accommodation to another com-

pany. But I both see, and would earnestly endeavour to advocate, the propriety of keeping the architecture of the building within those ramparts masculine and simple in style, and of not allowing a mistaken conception of picturesqueness to make a noble fortress look like a child's toy.

Believe me, my dear Sir, very faithfully yours,

J. RUSKIN.

From 'The Daily Telegraph,' December 22, 1871.

CASTLES AND KENNELS.

To the Editor of 'The Daily Telegraph.'

Sir,—I was astonished the other day by your article on taverns, but never yet in my life was so much astonished by anything in print as by your to-day's article on castles.*

I am a castle-lover of the truest sort. I do not suppose any man alive has felt anything like the sorrow or anger with which I have watched the modern destruction by railroad and manufacture, helped by the wicked improvidence of our great families, of half the national memorials of England, either actually or in effect and power of association —as Conway, for instance, now vibrating to ruin over a railroad station. For Warwick Castle, I named it in my letter of last October, in "Fors Clavigera,"† as a type of the architectural treasures

* The article on taverns occurred in the *Daily Telegraph* of the 8th December, and commented on a recent meeting of the Licensed Victuallers' Protection Society. There was also a short article upon drunkenness as a cause of crime in the *Daily Telegraph* of December 9—referred to by Mr. Ruskin in a letter which will be found in the second volume of this book. The article on castles concluded with an appeal for public subscriptions towards the restoration of Warwick Castle, then recently destroyed by fire.

† The passage alluded to is partly as follows. "It happened also, which was the real cause of my bias in after-life, that my father had a

of this England of ours known to me and beloved from childhood to this hour.

But, Sir, I am at this hour endeavouring to find work and food for a boy of seventeen, one of eight people—two married couples, a woman and her daughter, and this boy and his sister,—who all sleep together in one room, some 18 ft. square, in the heart of London; and you call upon me for a subscription to help to rebuild Warwick Castle.

Sir, I am an old and thoroughbred Tory, and as such I say, "If a noble family cannot rebuild their own castle, in God's name let them live in the nearest ditch till they can."

I am, Sir, your faithful servant,

J. RUSKIN.

DENMARK HILL, *Dec.* 20.

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real love of pictures. . . . Accordingly, wherever there was a gallery to be seen, we stopped at the nearest town for the night; and in reverentest manner I thus saw nearly all the noblemen's houses in England; not indeed myself at that age caring for the pictures, but much for castles and ruins, feeling more and more, as I grew older, the healthy delight of uncovetous admiration, and perceiving, as soon as I could perceive any political truth at all, that it was probably much happier to live in a small house and have Warwick Castle to be astonished at, than to live in Warwick Castle, and have nothing to be astonished at; and that, at all events, it would not make Brunswick Square in the least more pleasantly habitable to pull Warwick Castle down. And, at this day, though I have kind invitations enough to visit America, I could not, even for a couple of months, live in a country so miserable as to possess no castles."

From 'The Daily Telegraph,' December 25, 1871.

VERONA *v.* WARWICK.

To the Editor of 'The Daily Telegraph.'

Sir,—Of lodging for poor and rich you will perhaps permit a further word or two from me, even in your close columns for Christmas morning. You think me inconsistent because I wanted to buy Verona, and do not want to restore Warwick.*

I wanted, and still want, to buy Verona. I would give half my fortune to buy it for England, if any other people would help me. But I would buy it, that what is left of it might not be burned, and what is lost of it *not* restored. It would indeed be very pleasant—not to me only, but to many other sorrowful persons—if things *could* be restored when we chose. I would subscribe willingly to restore, for instance, the manger wherein the King of Judah lay cradled this day some years since, and not unwillingly to restore the poorer cradle of our English King-maker, were it possible. But for the making of a new manger, to be exhibited for the edification of the religious British public, I will

* In a second article upon the same subject the *Daily Telegraph* had expressed surprise at Mr. Ruskin's former letter. "Who does not remember," it wrote, "his proposal to buy Verona, so as to secure from decay the glorious monuments in it?"

not subscribe. No ; nor for the building of mock castles, or mock cathedrals, or mocks of anything. And the sum of what I have to say in this present matter may be put in few words.

As an antiquary—which, thank Heaven, I am—I say, "Part of Warwick Castle is burnt—'tis pity. Take better care of the rest."

As an old Tory—which, thank Heaven, I am—I say, "Lord Warwick's house is burned. Let Lord Warwick build a better if he can,—a worse if he must,—but in any case, let him neither beg nor borrow."

As a modern renovator and Liberal—which, thank Heaven, I am not—I would say, "By all means let the public subscribe to build a spick-and-span new Warwick Castle, and let the pictures be touched up, and exhibited by gaslight ; let the family live in the back rooms, and let there be a *table d'hôte* in the great hall at two and six every day, 2*s.* 6*d.* a head, and let us have Guy's bowl for a dinner bell."

I am, Sir, your faithful servant,

JOHN RUSKIN.

DENMARK HILL, S.E., 24*th* (for 25*th*) *December*.

From 'The Daily Telegraph,' January 19, 1871.

"NOTRE DAME DE PARIS."

To the Editor of 'The Daily Telegraph.'

Sir,—It may perhaps be interesting to some of your readers, in the present posture of affairs round Paris, to know, as far as I am able to tell them, the rank which the Church of Notre Dame holds among architectural and historical monuments.

Nearly every great church in France has some merit special to itself; in other countries, one style is common to many districts; in France, nearly every province has its unique and precious monument.

But of thirteenth-century Gothic—the most perfect architectural style north of the Alps—there is both in historical interest, and in accomplished perfectness of art, one *unique* monument—the Sainte Chapelle of Paris.

As examples of Gothic, ranging from the twelfth to the fourteenth century, the cathedrals of Chartres, Rouen, Amiens, Rheims, and Bourges, form a kind of cinque-foil round Notre Dame of Paris, of which it is impossible to say which is the more precious petal; but any of those leaves would be worth a complete rose of any other country's work except Italy's. Nothing else in art, on the surface of the

round earth, could represent any one of them, if destroyed, or be named as of any equivalent value.

Central among these, as in position, so in its school of sculpture; unequalled in that specialty but by the porch of the north transept of Rouen, and, in a somewhat later school, by the western porches of Bourges; absolutely unreplaceable as a pure and lovely source of art instruction by any future energy or ingenuity, stands—perhaps, this morning, I ought rather to write, stood *—Notre Dame of Paris.

I am, Sir, your faithful servant,

J. RUSKIN.

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* This letter, it will be noticed, was written during the bombardment and a few days before the capitulation of Paris in 1871.

From 'The Pall Mall Gazette,' March 16, 1872.

MR. RUSKIN'S INFLUENCE: A DEFENCE.

To the Editor of 'The Pall Mall Gazette.'

Sir,—I receive many letters just now requesting me to take notice of the new theory respecting Turner's work put forward by Dr. Liebreich in his recent lecture at the Royal Institution.* Will you permit me to observe in your columns, once for all, that I have no time for the contradiction of the various foolish opinions and assertions which from time to time are put forward respecting Turner or his pictures? All that is necessary for any person generally interested in the arts to know about Turner was clearly stated in "Modern Painters" twenty years ago, and I do not mean to state it again, nor to contradict any contradictions of it. Dr. Liebreich is an ingenious and zealous scientific person. The public may derive much benefit from consulting him on the subject of spectacles—not on that of art.

* On Friday, March 8, 1872, entitled 'Turner and Mulready—On the Effect of certain Faults of Vision on Painting, with especial reference to their Works.' The argument of the lecturer, and distinguished oculist, was that the change of style in the pictures of Turner was due to a change in his *eyes* which developed itself during the last twenty years of his life. (See 'Proceedings of the Royal Institution,' 1872, vol. vi., p. 450.)

As I am under the necessity of writing to you at any rate, may I say further that I wish your critic of Mr. Eastlake's book* on the Gothic revival would explain what he means by saying that my direct influence on architecture is always wrong, and my indirect influence right; because, if that be so, I will try to exercise only indirect influence on my Oxford pupils. But the fact to my own notion is otherwise. I am proud enough to hope, for instance, that I have had some direct influence on Mr. Street; and I do not doubt but

* 'A History of the Gothic Revival.' By Charles L. Eastlake, F.R.I.B.A. London, Longman and Co., 1872.—In this work Mr. Eastlake had estimated very highly Mr. Ruskin's influence on modern architecture, whilst his reviewer was "disposed to say that Mr. Ruskin's direct and immediate influences had almost always been in the wrong; and his more indirect influences as often in the right." It is upon these words that Mr. Ruskin comments here, and to this comment the critic replied in a letter which appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette* of the 20th inst. The main portion of his reply was as follows: "The direct influences, then, which I had principally in my mind were those which had resulted in a preference for Venetian over English Gothic, in the underrating of expressional character in architecture, and the overrating of sculptured ornament, especially of a naturalistic and imitative character, and more generally in an exclusiveness which limited the due influence of some, as I think, noble styles of architecture. By the indirect influences I meant the habit of looking at questions of architectural art in the light of imaginative ideas; the recognition of the vital importance of such questions even in their least important details; and generally an enthusiasm and activity which could have resulted from no less a force than Mr. Ruskin's wondrously suggestive genius." To this explanation Mr. Ruskin replied in his second letter on the subject.

that the public will have more satisfaction from his Law Courts* than they have had from anything built within fifty years. But I have had indirect influence on nearly every cheap villa-builder between this† and Bromley; and there is scarcely a public-house near the Crystal Palace but sells its gin and bitters under pseudo-Venetian capitals copied from the Church of the Madonna of Health or of Miracles. And one of my principal notions for leaving my present house is that it is surrounded everywhere by the accursed Frankenstein monsters of, *in*directly, my own making.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

JOHN RUSKIN.

March 15.

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* Mr. Street's design for the New Law Courts was, after much discussion, selected, May 30, 1868, and approved by commission, August, 1870. The building was not, however, begun till February, 1874, and the hope expressed in this letter is therefore, unfortunately, no expression of opinion on the work itself.

† Denmark Hill.

From 'The Pall Mall Gazette,' March 21, 1872.

MR. RUSKIN'S INFLUENCE: A REJOINDER.

To the Editor of 'The Pall Mall Gazette.'

Sir,—I am obliged by your critic's reply to my question, but beg to observe that, meaning what he explains himself to have meant, he should simply have said that my influence on temper was right, and on taste wrong; the influence being in both cases equally 'direct.' On questions of taste I will not venture into discussion with him, but must be permitted to correct his statement that I have persuaded any one to prefer Venetian to English Gothic. I have stated that Italian—chiefly Pisan and Florentine—Gothic is the noblest school of Gothic hitherto existent, which is true; and that one form of Venetian Gothic deserves singular respect for the manner of its development. I gave the mouldings and shaft measurements of that form,* and to so little purpose, that I challenge your critic to find in London, or within twenty miles of it, a single Venetian casement built on the sections which I gave as normal.

* See 'Arabian Windows in the Campo Santa Maria, Mater Domini, Plate ii. of the 'Examples of the Architecture of Venice,' selected and drawn to measurement from the edifice, 1851. And see, too, 'Stones of Venice,' vol. ii., chap. vii., Gothic Palaces.

For Venetian architecture developed out of British moral consciousness I decline to be answerable. His accusation that I induced architects to study sculpture more, and what he is pleased to call "expressional character" less, I admit. I should be glad if he would tell me what, before my baneful influence began to be felt, the expressional character of our building was; and I will reconsider my principles if he can point out to me, on any modern building either in London or, as aforesaid, within twenty miles round, a single piece of good sculpture of which the architect repents, or the public complains.

I am, Sir, your faithful servant,

J. RUSKIN.

March 21.

From 'The Liverpool Daily Post,' June 9, 1877.

MODERN RESTORATION.*

VENICE, 15*th April*, 1877.

My dear Sir,—It is impossible for any one to know the horror and contempt with which I regard modern restoration—but it is so great that it simply paralyzes me in despair,—and in the sense of such difference in all thought and feeling between me and the people I live in the midst of, almost makes it useless for me to talk to them. Of course all restoration is accursed architect's jobbery, and will go on as long as they can get their filthy bread by such business. But things are worse here than in England: you have little there left to lose—here, every hour is ruining buildings of inestimable beauty and historical value—simply to keep stone-lawyers† at work. I am obliged to hide my face from it all, and work at other things, or I should die of mere indignation and disgust.

Ever truly yours,

J. RUSKIN.

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* This letter was originally received by 'a Liverpool gentleman,' and sent enclosed in a long letter signed 'An Antiquarian,' to the *Liverpool Daily Post*.

† An obvious misprint for 'stone-layers.'

From 'The Kidderminster Times,' July 28, 1877.

RIBBESFORD CHURCH.

To the Editor of 'The Kidderminster Times.'

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE,
July 24, 1877.

Sir,—It chanced that, on the morning of the Sunday, when the appearances of danger in the walls of Ribbesford Church began seriously to manifest themselves (according to the report in your columns of the 21st inst.),* I was standing outside of the church, listening to the singing of the last hymn as the sound came through the open door (with the Archer Knight sculptured above it), and showing to the friend who had brought me to the lovely place the extreme interest of the old perpendicular traceries in the freehand working of the apertures.

Permit me to say, with reference to the proposed restoration of the church, that no modern architect, no mason either, can, or would if they could, "copy" those traceries. They will assuredly put up with

* Ribbesford Church was finally closed after the morning service on Sunday, July 15, 1877. It was then restored, and was reopened and reconsecrated on June 15, 1879. The *Kidderminster Times* of the 21st inst. contained an account of a meeting of the Ribbesford parishioners to consider the restoration of the church. Hence the allusions in this letter to "copying" the traceries.

geometrical models in their place, which will be no more like the old traceries than a Kensington paper pattern is like a living flower. Whatever else is added or removed, those traceries should be replaced as they are, and left in reverence until they moulder away. If they are already too much decayed to hold the glass safely (which I do not believe), any framework which may be necessary can be arranged to hold the casements within them, leaving their bars entirely disengaged, and merely kept from falling by iron supports. But if these are to be "copied," why in the world cannot the congregation pay for a new and original church, to display the genius and wealth of the nineteenth century somewhere else, and leave the dear old ruin to grow gray by Severn side in peace?

I am, Sir, your faithful servant,

J. RUSKIN.

CIRCULAR* RESPECTING MEMORIAL STUDIES OF ST. MARK'S, VENICE, NOW IN PROGRESS UNDER MR. RUSKIN'S DIRECTION.

This circular will be given to visitors to the Old Water-colour Society's Exhibition, Pall Mall East, or on application to the Fine Art Society 148, *New Bond Street.*

My friends have expressed much surprise at my absence from the public meetings called in defence of St. Mark's. They cannot, however, be too clearly certified that I am now entirely unable to take part in exciting business, or even, without grave danger, to allow my mind to dwell on the subjects which, having once been dearest to it, are now the sources of acutest pain. The illness which all but killed me two years ago† was not brought on by overwork, but by grief at the course of public affairs in England, and of affairs, public and private alike, in Venice; the distress of many an old and deeply regarded friend there among the humbler classes of the city being as necessary a consequence of the modern system of centralization, as the destruction of her ancient civil and religious buildings.

* This circular, which was distributed as above noted during the winter of 1879-80, is here reprinted by Mr. Ruskin's permission, in connection with the preceding letters upon restoration in architecture. See the Notes on Prout and Hunt, 1879-80, p. 71.

† In February, 1878; see the 'Turner Notes' of that year, and 'Fors Clavigera,' New Series—Letter the Fourth, March, 1880.

How far forces of this national momentum may be arrested by protest, or mollified by petition, I know not; what in either kind I have felt myself able to do has been done two years since, in conjunction with one of the few remaining representatives of the old Venetian noblesse.* All that now remains for me is to use what time may be yet granted for such record as hand and heart can make of the most precious building in Europe, standing yet in the eyes of men and the sunshine of heaven.

The drawing of the first two arches of the west front, now under threat of restoration, which, as an honorary member of the Old Water-colour Society, I have the privilege of exhibiting in its rooms this year, shows with sufficient accuracy the actual state of the building, and the peculiar qualities of its architecture.† The principles of that architecture are analyzed at length in the second volume of the 'Stones of Venice,' and the whole façade described there with the best care I could, in hope of directing the attention of English architects to the forms of Greek sculpture which enrich it.‡ The words have

* Count Alvise Piero Zorzi, the author of an admirable and authoritative essay on the restoration of St. Mark's (Venice, 1877).

† This drawing (No. 28 in the Exhibition) was of a small portion of the west front.

‡ 'Stones of Venice,' vol. ii., chapter 4, of original edition, and vol. i., chapter 4, o the smaller edition for the use of travellers.

been occasionally read for the sound of them ; and perhaps, when the building is destroyed, may be some day, with amazement, perceived to have been true.

In the meantime, the drawing just referred to, every touch of it made from the building, and left as the colour dried in the spring mornings of 1877, will make clear some of the points chiefly insisted on in the 'Stones of Venice,' and which are of yet more importance now.* Of these, the first and main ones are the exquisite delicacy of the work and perfection of its preservation to this time. It seems to me that the English visitor never realizes thoroughly what it is that he looks at in the St. Mark's porches: its glittering confusion in a style unexampled, its bright colours, its mingled marbles, produce on him no real impression of age, and its diminutive size scarcely any of grandeur. It looks to him almost like a stage scene, got up solidly for some sudden festa. No mere guide-book's passing assertion of date—this century or the other—can in the least make him even conceive, and far less feel, that he is actually standing before the very shafts

* In the first edition of this circular this sentence ran as follows:—"In the meantime, with the aid of the drawing just referred to, every touch of it from the building, and left, as the colour dried in the morning light of the 10th May, 1877, some of the points chiefly insisted on in the 'Stones of Venice,' are of importance now."

and stones that were set on their foundations here while Harold the Saxon stood by the grave of the Confessor under the fresh-raised vaults of the first Norman Westminster Abbey, of which now a single arch only remains standing. He cannot, by any effort, imagine that those exquisite and lace-like sculptures of twined acanthus,—every leaf-edge as sharp and fine as if they were green weeds fresh springing in the dew, by the Pan-droseion,*—were, indeed, cut and finished to their perfect grace while the Norman axes were hewing out rough zigzags and dentils round the aisles of Durham and Lindisfarne. Or nearer, in what is left of our own Canterbury—it is but an hour's journey in pleasant Kent—you may compare, almost as if you looked from one to the other, the grim grotesque of the block capitals in the crypt with the foliage of these flexile ones, and with their marble doves—scarcely distinguishable from the living birds that nestle between them. Or, going down two centuries (for the fillings of the portico arches were not completed till after 1204), what thirteenth-century work among our grey limestone walls can be thought of as wrought in the same hour with that wreath of intertwined white marble, relieved by gold, of which the tenderest and sharpest lines of the pencil cannot finely enough

* Printed 'Pan-choreion' in the first edition.

express the surfaces and undulations? For indeed, without and within, St. Mark's is not, in the real nature of it, a piece of architecture, but a jewelled casket and painted reliquary, chief of the treasures in what were once the world's treasuries of sacred things, the kingdoms of Christendom.

A jewelled casket, every jewel of which was itself sacred. Not a slab of it, nor a shaft, but has been brought from the churches descendants of the great Seven of Asia, or from the Christian-Greek of Corinth, Crete, and Thrace, or the Christian-Israelite in Palestine—the central archivolt copied from that of the church of the Holy Sepulchre, and the opposing lions or phœnixes of its sculptures from the treasury of Atreus and the citadel of Tyre.

Thus, beyond all measure of value as a treasury of art, it is also, beyond all other volumes, venerable as a codex of religion. Just as the white foliage and birds on their golden ground are descendants, in direct line, from the ivory and gold of Phidias, so the Greek pictures and inscriptions, whether in mosaic or sculpture, throughout the building, record the unbroken unity of spiritual influence from the Father of light—or the races whose own poets had said 'We also are his offspring'—down to the day when all their gods, not slain, but changed into new creatures, became the types

to them of the mightier Christian spirits; and Perseus became St. George, and Mars St. Michael, and Athena the Madonna, and Zeus their revealed Father in Heaven.

In all the history of human mind, there is nothing so wonderful, nothing so eventful, as this spiritual change. So inextricably is it interwoven with the most divine, the most distant threads of human thought and effort, that while none of the thoughts of St. Paul or the visions of St. John can be understood without our understanding first the imagery familiar to the Pagan worship of the Greeks; on the other hand, no understanding of the real purport of Greek religion can be securely reached without watching the translation of its myths into the message of Christianity.

Both by the natural temper of my mind, and by the labour of forty years given to this subject in its practical issues on the present state* of Christendom, I have become, in some measure, able both to show and to interpret these most precious sculptures; and my health has been so far given back to me that if I am at this moment aided, it will, so far as I can

* For "state," the first edition reads "mind," and for "have become, in some measure, able," it has "have qualified myself." So again for "am at this moment aided," it reads "am asked, and enabled to do so."

judge, be easily possible for me to complete the work so long in preparation. There will yet, I doubt not, be time to obtain perfect record of all that is to be destroyed. I have entirely honest and able draughtsmen at my command; my own resignation* of my Oxford Professorship has given me leisure; and all that I want from the antiquarian sympathy of England is so much instant help as may permit me, while yet in available vigour of body and mind, to get the records made under my own overseership, and registered for sufficient and true. The casts and drawings which I mean to have made will be preserved in a consistent series in my Museum at Sheffield, where I have freehold ground enough to build a perfectly lighted gallery for their reception. I have used the words 'I want,' as if praying this thing for myself. It is not so. If only some other person could and would undertake all this, Heaven knows how gladly I would leave the task to him. But there is no one else at present able to do it: if not now by me, it can never be done more. And so I leave it to the reader's grace.

J. RUSKIN.

All subscriptions to be sent to Mr. G. ALLEN, Sunnyside, Orpington, Kent.

* Early in 1879.

POSTSCRIPT.*

By the kindness of the Society of Painters in Water-colours I am permitted this year, in view of the crisis of the fate of the façade of St. Mark's, to place in the Exhibition-room of the Society ten photographs, illustrative of its past and present state. I have already made use of them, both in my lectures at Oxford and in the parts of *Fors Clavigera* intended for Art-teaching at my Sheffield Museum; and all but the eighth are obtainable from my assistant, Mr. Ward (2, Church Terrace, Richmond), who is my general agent for photographs, either taken under my direction (as here, Nos. 4, 9, and 10), or specially chosen by me for purposes of Art Education. The series of views here shown are all perfectly taken, with great clearness, from the most important points, and give, consecutively, complete evidence respecting the façade.

They are arranged in the following order:—

1. The Central Porch.
2. The Two Northern Porches.
3. The Two Southern Porches.

Arranged in one frame.

4. The Northern Portico.
5. The Southern Portico. *Before restoration.*
6. The West Front, in Perspective. *Seen from the North.*
7. The West Front, in Perspective. *Seen from the South.*
8. The South Side. *Before restoration.*
9. Detail of Central Archivolt.
10. The Cross of the Merchants of Venice.

This last photograph is not of St. Mark's, but is of the inscription which I discovered, in 1877, on the Church of

* Printed in the second edition only.

St. James of the Rialto. It is of the 9th or 10th century (according to the best antiquarians in Venice), and is given in this series, first, to confirm the closing paragraph in my notes on the Prout drawings in Bond Street;* and secondly, to show the perfect preservation even of the hair-strokes in letters carved in the Istrian marble used at Venice a thousand years ago. The inscription on the cross is,—

'Sit crux vera salus huic tua Christe loco.'
(Be Thy Cross, O Christ, the true safety of this place.)

And on the band beneath,—

'Hoc circa templum sit jus mercantibus æquum,
Pondera nec vergant nec sit conventio prava.'
(Around this temple let the merchants' law be just,
Their weights true, and their contracts fair.)

The bearing of this inscription on the relations of Antonio to Shylock may perhaps not be perceived by a public which now—consistently and naturally enough, but ominously—considers Shylock a victim to the support of the principles

* The reference is to the closing paragraph of the Preface to the Notes, which runs as follows:—"Athena, observe, of the Agora, or Market *Place*. And St. James of the Deep Stream or Market *River*. The Angels of Honest Sale and Honest Porterage; such honest porterage being the grandeur of the Grand Canal, and of all other canals, rivers, sounds, and seas that ever moved in wavering morris under the night. And the eternally electric light of the embankment of that Rialto stream was shed upon it by the Cross:—know you that for certain, you dwellers by high-embanked and steamer-burdened Thames. And learn from your poor wandering painter this lesson—for the sum of the best he had to give you (it is the Alpha of the Laws of true human life)—that no city is prosperous in the sight of heaven, unless the peasant sells in its market—adding this lesson of Gentile Bellini's for the Omega, that no city is ever righteous in the Sight of Heaven unless the Noble walks in its street." (Notes on Prout and Hunt, p. 44.)

of legitimate trade, and Antonio a 'speculator and sentimentalist.' From the series of photographs of St. Mark's itself, I cannot but think even the least attentive observer must receive one strong impression—that of the singular preservation of the minutest details in its sculpture. Observe, this is a quite separate question from the *stability* of the fabric. In our northern cathedrals the stone, for the most part, moulders away; and the restorer usually replaces it by fresh sculpture, on the faces of walls of which the mass is perfectly secure. Here, at St. Mark's, on the contrary, the only possible pretence for restoration has been, and is, the alleged insecurity of the masses of inner wall—the external sculptures remaining in faultless perfection, so far as unaffected by direct human violence. Both the Greek and Istrian marbles used at Venice are absolutely defiant of hypæthral influences, and the edges of their delicatest sculpture remain to this day more sharp than if they had been cut in steel—for then they would have rusted away. It is especially for example of this quality that I have painted the ornament of the St. Jean d'Acre pillars, No. 107, which the reader may at once compare with the daguerreotype (No. 108) beside it, which are exhibited, with the Prout and Hunt drawings, at the Fine Art Society's rooms.* These pillars are known to be not later than the sixth century, yet wherever external violence has spared their decoration it is as sharp as a fresh-growing thistle. Throughout the whole façade of St. Mark's, the capitals have only here and there by casualty lost so much as a volute or an acanthus leaf, and whatever remains is perfect as on the day it was set in its place,

* See the 'Notes on Prout and Hunt,' p. 78.

mellowed and subdued only in colour by time, but white still, clearly white; and grey, still softly grey; its porphyry purple as an Orleans plum, and the serpentine as green as a greengage. Note also, that in this throughout perfect decorated surface there is not a loose joint. The appearances of dislocation, which here and there look like yielding of masonry, are merely carelessness in the replacing or resetting of the marble armour at the different times when the front has been retouched—in several cases quite wilful freaks of arrangement. The slope of the porphyry shaft, for instance, on the angle at the left of my drawing, looks like dilapidation. Were it really so, the building would be a heap of ruins in twenty-four hours. These porches sustain no weight above,—their pillars carry merely an open gallery; and the inclination of the red marble pilasters at the angle is not yielding at all, but an originally capricious adjustment of the marble armour. It will be seen that the investing marbles between the arch and pilaster are cut to the intended inclination, which brings the latter nearly into contact with the upper archivolt; the appearance of actual contact being caused by the projection of the dripstone. There are, indeed, one or two leaning towers in Venice whose foundations have partly yielded; but if *anything* were in danger on St. Mark's Place, it would be the campanile —three hundred feet high,—and not the little shafts and galleries within reach—too easy reach—of the gaslighter's ladder. And the only dilapidations I have myself seen on this porch, since I first drew it forty-six years ago, have been, first, those caused by the insertion of the lamps themselves, and then the breaking away of the marble network of the main capital by the habitual clattering of the said gaslighter's ladder against it. A piece of it which

I saw so broken off, and made an oration over to the passers-by in no less broken Italian, is in my mineral cabinet at Brantwood.

Before leaving this subject of the inclined angle, let me note—usefully, though not to my present purpose—that the entire beauty of St. Mark's Campanile depends on this structure, there definitely seen to be one of real safety. This grace and apparent strength of the whole mass would be destroyed if the sides of it were made vertical. In Gothic towers, the same effect is obtained by the retiring of the angle buttresses, without actual inclination of any but the coping lines.

In the Photograph No. 5 the slope of the angles in the correspondent portico, as it stood before restoration, is easily visible and measurable, the difference being, even on so small a scale, full the twentieth of an inch between the breadth at base and top, at the angles, while the lines bearing the inner arch are perfectly vertical.

There was, indeed, as will be seen at a glance, some displacement of the pillars dividing the great window above, immediately to the right of the portico. But these pillars were exactly the part of the south front which carried no weight. The arch above them is burdened only by its own fringes of sculpture; and the pillars carried only the bit of decorated panelling, which is now bent—not outwards, as it would have been by pressure, but inwards. The arch has not subsided; it was always of the same height as the one to the right of it (the Byzantine builders throwing their arches always in whatever lines they chose); nor is there a single crack or displacement in the sculpture of the investing fringe.

In No. 3 (to the right hand in the frame) there is

dilapidation and danger enough certainly; but that is wholly caused by the savage and brutal carelessness with which the restored parts are joined to the old. The photograph bears deadly and perpetual witness against the system of 'making work,' too well known now among English as well as Italian operatives; but it bears witness, as deadly, against the alleged accuracy of the restoration itself. The ancient dentils are bold, broad, and cut with the free hand, as all good Greek work is; the new ones, little more than half their size, are cut with the servile and horrible rigidity of the modern mechanic.

This quality is what M. Meduna, in the passage quoted from his defence of himself* in the *Standard*, has at once the dullness and the audacity actually to boast of as '*plus exacte*'!

Imagine a Kensington student set to copy a picture by Velasquez, and substituting a Nottingham lace pattern, traced with absolute exactness, for the painter's sparkle and flow and flame, and boasting of his improvements as '*plus exacte*'! That is precisely what the Italian restorer does for *his* original; but, alas! he has the inestimable privilege also of destroying the original as he works, and putting his student's caricature in its place! Nor are any words bitter or contemptuous enough to describe the bestial stupidities which have thus already replaced the floor of the church, in my early days the loveliest in Italy, and the most sacred.

In the Photograph No. 7 there is, and there only, *one* piece of real dilapidation—the nodding pinnacle propped on the right. Those pinnacles stand over the roof gutters, and their bracket supports are, of course, liable to dis-

* See the *Standard* (Dec. 3, 1879). M. Meduna was the architect who carried out the "restoration" of the south façade of the Cathedral.

placement, if the gutters get choked by frost or otherwise neglected. The pinnacle is not ten feet high, and can be replaced and secured as easily as the cowl on a chimney-pot. The timbers underneath were left there merely to give the wished-for appearance of repairs going on. They defaced the church front through the whole winter of 1876. I copied the bills stuck on them one Sunday, and they are printed in the 78th number of *Fors Clavigera*, the first being the announcement of the Reunited agencies for information on all matters of commercial enterprise and speculation, and the last the announcement of the loss of a cinnamon-coloured little bitch, with rather long ears (*coll' orecchie piùtosto lunghe*). I waited through the winter to see how much the Venetians really cared for the look of their church; but lodged a formal remonstrance in March with one of the more reasonable civic authorities, who presently had them removed. The remonstrance ought, of course, to have come from the clergy; but they contented themselves with cutting flower-wreaths on paper to hang over the central door at Christmas time. For the rest, the pretence of rottenness in the walls is really too gross to be answered. There are brick buildings in Italy by tens of thousands, Roman, Lombardic, Gothic, on all scales and in all exposures. Which of them has rotted or fallen, but by violence? Shall the tower of Garisenda stand, and the Campanile of Verona, and the tower of St. Mark's, and, forsooth, this little fifty feet of unweighted wall be rotten and dangerous?

Much more I could say, and show; but the certainty of the ruin of poor Bedlamite Venice is in her own evil will, and not to be averted by any human help or pleading. Her *Sabba delle streghe* has truly come; and in her own

words (see *Fors*, letter 77th): 'Finalmente la Piazza di S. Marco sarà invasa e completamente illuminata dalle Fiamme di Belzebù. Perchè il *Sabba* possa riuscire più completo, si raccomanda a tutti gli spettatori di fischiare durante le fiamme come anime dannate.'

Meantime, in what Saturday pause may be before this Witches' Sabbath, if I have, indeed, any English friends, let them now help me, and my fellow-workers, to get such casts, and colourings, and measurings, as may be of use in time to come. I am not used to the begging tone, and will not say more than that what is given me will go in mere daily bread to the workers, and that next year, if I live, there shall be some exposition of what we have got done, with the best account I can render of its parts and pieces. Fragmentary enough they must be—poor fallen plumes of the winged lion's wings,—yet I think I can plume a true shaft or two with them yet.

Some copies of the second edition of this circular had printed at the top of its last and otherwise blank page the words, "*Present State of Subscription Lists:—*," a printer's error, mistaken by some readers for a piece of dry humour.

Subscriptions were collected by Mr. G. Allen, as above intimated, and also by Mr. F. W. Pullen, secretary to the Ruskin Society of Manchester, under the authority of the following letter, which was printed and distributed by him.—"*November* 29, 1879.—Dear Mr. Pullen,—I am very glad to have your most satisfactory letter, and as gladly give you authority to receive subscriptions for drawings and sculptures of St. Mark's. Mr. Bunney's large painting of the whole west façade, ordered by me a year and a half ago, and in steady progress ever since, is to be completed this spring. It was a £500 commission for the Guild, but I don't want to have to pay it with Guild capital. I have the power of getting casts also, in places where nobody else can, and have now energy enough to give directions, but can no more pay for them out of my own pocket. Ever gratefully

yours, J. R.—As a formal authority, this had better have my full signature—JOHN RUSKIN."—In a further letter to Manchester on the subject, Mr. Ruskin wrote as follows:—"It is wholly impossible for me at present to take any part in the defence—at last, though far too late—undertaken by the true artists and scholars of England—of the most precious Christian building in Europe; . . . nor is there any occasion that I should, if only those who care for me will refer to what I have already written, and will accept from me the full ratification of all that was said by the various speakers, all without exception men of the most accurate judgment and true feeling, at the meeting held in Oxford. All that I think it necessary for you to lay, directly from myself, before the meeting you are about to hold, is the explicit statement of two facts of which I am more distinctly cognizant from my long residences in Italy at different periods, and in Venice during these last years, than any other person can be:—namely, the Infidel—(malignantly and scornfully Infidel and anti-religionist) aim of Italian 'restoration'—and the totality of the destruction it involves, of whatever it touches." So again, in a second and despairing letter, he wrote, "You cannot be too strongly assured of the total destruction involved, in the restoration of St. Mark's. . . . Then the plague of it all is, What can you do? Nothing would be effectual, but the appointment of a Procurator of St. Mark's, with an enormous salary, dependent on the Church's being let alone. What you can do by a meeting at Manchester, I have no notion. The only really practical thing that I can think of would be sending me lots of money to spend in getting all the drawings I can of the old thing before it goes. I don't believe we can save it by any protests."—See the *Birmingham Daily Mail*, Nov. 27, 1879.—The reader is also referred to 'Fors Clavigera,' New Series, Letter the Fourth, pp. 125-6.

The meeting in Oxford alluded to above was held in the Sheldonian Theatre on November 15, 1879. Amongst the principal speakers were the Dean of Christ Church (in the chair), Dr. Acland, the Professor of Fine Art (Mr. W. B. Richmond), Mr. Street, Mr. William Morris, and Mr. Burne Jones.

LETTERS ON SCIENCE.

I.

GEOLOGICAL.

THE CONFORMATION OF THE ALPS. 1864.
CONCERNING GLACIERS. 1864.
ENGLISH *VERSUS* ALPINE GEOLOGY. 1864.
CONCERNING HYDROSTATICS. 1864.
JAMES DAVID FORBES: HIS REAL GREATNESS. 1874.

II

MISCELLANEOUS.

ON REFLECTIONS IN WATER. 1844.
ON THE REFLECTION OF RAINBOWS. 1861.
A LANDSLIP NEAR GIAGNANO. 1841.
ON THE GENTIAN. 1857.
ON THE STUDY OF NATURAL HISTORY. (UNDATED.)

I

GEOLOGICAL.

From 'The Reader,' November 12, 1864.

THE CONFORMATION OF THE ALPS.

DENMARK HILL, 10*th November*, 1864.

My attention has but now been directed to the letters in your October numbers on the subject of the forms of the Alps.* I have, perhaps, some claim to be heard on this question, having spent, out of a somewhat busy life, eleven summers and two winters (the winter work being especially useful, owing to the definition of inaccessible ledges of strata by new-fallen snow) in researches among the Alps, directed solely to the questions of their external form and its mechanical causes; while I left to other geologists the more disputable and difficult problems of relative ages of beds.

* The *Reader* of October 15 contained an article 'On the Conformation of the Alps,' to which in the following issue of the journal (October 22) Sir Roderick Murchison replied in a letter dated "Torquay, 16th October," and entitled 'On the Excavation of Lake-Basins in solid rocks by Glaciers,' the possibility of which he altogether denied.

I say "more disputable" because, however complex the phases of mechanical action, its general nature admits, among the Alps, of no question. The forms of the Alps are quite *visibly* owing to the action (how gradual or prolonged cannot yet be determined) of elevatory, contractile, and expansive forces, followed by that of currents of water at various temperatures, and of prolonged disintegration—ice having had small share in modifying even the higher ridges, and none in causing or forming the valleys.

The reason of the extreme difficulty in tracing the combination of these several operative causes in any given instance, is that the effective and destructive drainage by no means follows the leading fissures, but tells fearfully on the softer rocks, sweeping away inconceivable volumes of these, while fissures or faults in the harder rocks of quite primal structural importance may be little deepened or widened, often even unindicated, by subsequent aqueous action. I have, however, described at some length the commonest structural and sculptural phenomena in the fourth volume of "Modern Painters," and I gave a general sketch of the subject last year in my lecture* at the Royal Institution

* 'On the Forms of the Stratified Alps of Savoy'—delivered on June 5, 1863. The subject was treated under three heads. 1. The

(fully reported in the *Journal de Genève* of 2nd September, 1863), but I have not yet thrown together the mass of material in my possession, because our leading chemists are only now on the point of obtaining some data for the analysis of the most important of all forces—that of the consolidation and crystallization of the metamorphic rocks, causing them to alter their bulk and exercise irresistible and irregular pressures on neighbouring or incumbent beds.

But, even on existing data, the idea of the excavation of valleys by ice has become one of quite ludicrous untenableness. At this moment, the principal glacier in Chamouni pours itself down a slope of twenty degrees or more over a rock two thousand feet in vertical height; and just at the bottom of this ice-cataract, where a water-cataract of equal power would have excavated an almost fathomless pool, the ice simply accumulates a heap of stones, on the top of which it rests.

The lakes of any hill country lie in what are the isolated lowest (as its summits are the isolated highest) portions of its broken surface, and ice no more engraves the one than it builds the other.

material of the Savoy Alps. 2. The mode of their formation. 3. The mode of their subsequent sculpture. (See the report of the lecture in the 'Proceedings of the Royal Institution,' 1863, vol. iv., p. 142. It was also printed by the Institution in a separate form, p. 4.)

But how these hollows were indeed first dug, we know as yet no more than how the Atlantic was dug; and the hasty expression by geologists of their fancies in such matters cannot be too much deprecated, because it deprives their science of the respect really due to it in the minds of a large portion of the public, who know, and *can* know, nothing of its established principles, while they can easily detect its speculative vanity. There is plenty of work for us all to do, without losing time in speculation; and when we have got good sections across the entire chain of the Alps, at intervals of twenty miles apart, from Nice to Innspruch, and exhaustive maps and sections of the lake-basins of Lucerne, Annecy, Como, and Garda, we shall have won the leisure, and may assume the right, to try our wits on the formative question.

J. RUSKIN.*

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* In reply to this letter, the *Reader* of November 19, 1864, published one from a Scottish correspondent, signed "Tain Caimbeul," the writer of which declared that, whilst he looked on Mr. Ruskin "as a thoroughly reliable guide in all that relates to the external aspects of the Alps," he could not "accept his leadership in questions of political economy or the mechanics of glacier motion."

From 'The Reader,' November, 26, 1864.

CONCERNING GLACIERS.

DENMARK HILL, *November* 21.

I am obliged to your Scottish correspondent for the courtesy with which he expresses himself towards me; and, as his letter refers to several points still (to my no little surprise) in dispute among geologists, you will perhaps allow me to occupy, in reply, somewhat more of your valuable space than I had intended to ask for.

I say "to my no little surprise," because the great principles of glacial action have been so clearly stated by their discoverer, Forbes, and its minor phenomena (though in an envious temper, which, by its bitterness, as a pillar of salt, has become the sorrowful monument of the discovery it denies)* so carefully described by Agassiz, that I never thought there would be occasion for much talk on the subject henceforward. As much as seems now necessary to be said I will say as briefly as I can.

What a river carries fast at the bottom of it, a glacier carries slowly at the top of it. This is the main distinction between their agencies. A piece of rock which, falling into a strong torrent, would

* See below, 'Forbes: his real greatness,' pp. 277 *seqq.*, and the references given in the notes there.

be perhaps swept down half a mile in twenty minutes, delivering blows on the rocks at the bottom audible like distant heavy cannon,* and at last dashed into fragments, which in a little while will be rounded pebbles (having done enough damage to everything it has touched in its course,)—this same rock, I say, falling on a glacier, lies on the top of it, and is thereon carried down, if at fullest speed, at the rate of three yards in a week, doing, usually, damage to nothing at all. That is the primal difference between the work of water and ice; these further differences, however, follow from this first one.

Though a glacier never rolls its moraine into pebbles, as a torrent does its shingle, it torments and teases the said moraine very sufficiently, and without intermission. It is always moving it on, and melting from under it, and one stone is always toppling, or tilting, or sliding over another, and one company of stones crashing over another, with staggering shift of heap behind. Now, leaving out of all account the pulverulent effect of original precipitation to glacier level from two or three thousand feet above, let the reader imagine a mass of sharp

* Even in lower Apennine, 'Dat sonitum saxis, et torto vertice torrens.'†

† Virgil, Æneid, vii. 567.

granite road-metal and paving-stones, mixed up with boulders of any size he can think of, and with wreck of softer rocks, (micaceous schists in quantities, usually,) the whole, say, half a quarter of a mile wide, and of variable thickness, from mere skin-deep mock-moraine on mounds of unsuspected ice—treacherous, shadow-begotten—to a railroad embankment, *passenger*-embankment, one eternal collapse of unconditional ruin, rotten to its heart with frost and thaw, (in regions on the edge of each,) and withering sun and waste of oozing ice; fancy all this heaved and shovelled, slowly, by a gang of a thousand Irish labourers, twenty miles downhill. You will conjecture there may be some dust developed on the way?—some at the hill bottom? Yet thus you will have but a dim idea of the daily and final results of the movements of glacier moraines,—beautiful result in granite and slate dust, delivered by the torrent at last in banks of black and white slime, recovering itself, far away, into fruitful fields, and level floor for human life.

Now all this is utterly independent of any action whatsoever by the ice on its sustaining rocks. It *has* an action on these indeed; but of this limited nature as compared with that of water. A stone at the bottom of a stream, or deep-sea current, necessarily and always presses on the bottom with

the weight of the column of water above it—plus the excess of its own weight above that of a bulk of water equal to its own; but a stone under a glacier may be hitched or suspended in the ice itself for long spaces, not touching bottom at all. When dropped at last, the weight of ice may not come upon it for years, for that weight is only carried on certain spaces of the rock bed; and in those very spaces the utmost a stone can do is to press on the bottom with the force necessary to drive the given stone into ice of a given density (usually porous); and, with this maximum pressure, to move at the maximum rate of about a third of an inch in a quarter of an hour! Try to saw a piece of marble through (with edge of iron, not of soppy ice, for saw, and with sharp flint sand for felspar slime), and move your saw at the rate of an inch in three-quarters of an hour, and see what lively and progressive work you will make of it!

I say "a piece of marble;" but your permanent glacier-bottom is rarely so soft—for a glacier, though it acts slowly by friction, can act vigorously by dead-weight on a soft rock, and (with fall previously provided for it) can clear masses of that out of the way, to some purpose. There is a notable instance of this in the rock of which your correspondent speaks, under the Glacier des Bois. His idea, that

the glacier is deep above and thins out below, is a curious instance of the misconception of glacier nature, from which all that Forbes has done cannot yet quite clear the public mind, nor even the geological mind. A glacier never, in a large sense, thins out at all as it expires. It flows level everywhere for its own part, and never slopes but down a slope, as a rapid in water. Pour out a pot of the thickest old white candied, but still fluent, honey you can buy, over a heap of stones, arranged as you like, to imitate rocks.* Whatever the honey does on a small scale, the glacier does on a large; and you may thus study the glacial phenomena of current—though, of course, not those of structure or fissure—at your ease. But note this specially:—when the honey is at last at rest, in whatever form it has taken, you will see it terminates in tongues with low rounded edges. The possible height of these edges, in any fluid, varies as its viscosity; it is some quarter of inch or so in water on dry ground; the most fluent ice will stand at about a hundred feet. Next, from this outer edge of the stagnant honey, delicately skim or thin off a little at the top, and see what it will do. It will not stand in an inclined plane, but fill itself up again to a level from behind. Glacier ice does exactly the same thing; and this

* See 'Deucalion,' vol. i. p. 93.

filling in from behind is done so subtly and delicately, that, every winter, the whole glacier surface rises to replace the summer's waste, not with progressive wave, as "twice a day the Severn fills;" but with silent, level insurrection, as of ocean-tide, the gray sea-crystal passes by. And all the structural phenomena of the ice are modified by this mysterious action.

Your correspondent is also not aware that the Glacier des Bois gives a very practical and outspoken proof of its shallowness opposite the Montanvert. Very often its torrent, under wilful touch of Lucina-sceptre, leaps to the light at the top of the rocks instead of their base.* That fiery Arveron, sometimes, hearing from reconnoitering streamlets of a nearer way down to the valley than the rounded ice-curve under the Chapeau, fairly takes bit in teeth, and flings itself out over the brow of the rocks, and down a ravine in them, in the wildest cataract of white thunder-clouds (endless in thunder, and with quiet fragments of rainbow for lightning,) that I have ever blinded myself in the skirts of.

These bare rocks, over which the main river

* There twice a day the Severn fills;
The salt sea-water passes by,
And hushes half the babbling Wye,
And makes a silence in the hills.
TENNYSON, 'In Memoriam,' xix.

sometimes falls (and outlying streamlets always) are of firm-grained, massively rounded gneiss. Above them, I have no doubt, once extended the upper covering of fibrous and amianthoidal schist, which forms the greater part of the south-eastern flank of the valley of Chamouni. The schistose gneiss is continuous in direction of bed, with the harder gneiss below. But the outer portion is soft, the inner hard, and more granitic. This outer portion the descending glaciers have always stripped right off down to the hard gneiss below, and in places, as immediately above the Montanvert (and elsewhere at the brows of the valley), the beds of schistose gneiss are crushed and bent outwards in a mass, (I believe) by the weight of the old glacier, for some fifty feet within their surface. This looks like work ; and work of this sort, when it had to be done, the glaciers were well up to, bearing down such soft masses as a strong man bends a poplar sapling ; but by steady push far more than by friction. You may bend or break your sapling with bare hands, but try to rub its bark off with your bare hands!

When once the ice, *with strength always dependent on pre-existent precipice*, has cleared such obstacles out of its way, and made its bed to its liking, there is an end to its manifest and effectively sculptural

power. I do not believe the Glacier des Bois has done more against some of the granite surfaces beneath it, for these four thousand years, than the drifts of desert sand have done on Sinai. Be that as it may, its power of excavation on a level is proved, as I showed in my last letter, to be zero. Your correspondent thinks the glacier power vanishes towards the extremity; but as long as the ice exists, it has the same progressive energy, and, indeed, sometimes, with the quite terminal nose of it, will plough a piece of ground scientifically enough; but it never digs a hole: the stream always comes from under it full speed downhill. Now, whatever the dimensions of a glacier, if it dug a big hole, like the Lake of Geneva, when it was big, it would dig a little hole when it was little—(not that this is *always* safe logic, for a little stone will dig in a glacier, and a large one build; but it is safe within general limits)—which it never does, nor can, but subsides gladly into any hole prepared for it in a quite placid manner, for all its fierce looks.

I find it difficult to stop, for your correspondent, little as he thinks it, has put me on my own ground. I was *forced* to write upon Art by an accident (the public abuse of Turner) when I was two-and-twenty; but I had written a "Mineralogical Dictionary" as

far as C, and invented a shorthand symbolism for crystalline forms, before I was fourteen: and have been at stony work ever since, as I could find time, silently, not caring to speak much till the chemists had given me more help.* For, indeed, I strive, as far as may be, not to speak of anything till I know it; and in that matter of Political Economy also (though forced in like manner to write of that by unendurable circumfluent fallacy), I know my ground; and if your present correspondent, or any other, will meet me fairly, I will give them uttermost satisfaction upon any point they doubt. There is free challenge: and in the knight of Snowdoun's vows (looking first carefully to see that the rock be not a glacier boulder),

"This rock shall fly
From its firm base, as soon as I."

J. RUSKIN.†

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* See 'Deucalion,' vol. i. p. 3 (Introduction).

† Following this letter in the same number of the *Reader* was one from the well-known geologist Mr. Joseph Beete Jukes, F.R.S., who, writing from "Selly Oak, Birmingham, Nov. 22," described as "the originator of the discussion." He therefore was no doubt the author of the article in the *Reader* alluded to above (p. 255, note). Mr. Jukes died in 1869.

From 'The Reader,' December 3, 1864.

ENGLISH *VERSUS* ALPINE GEOLOGY.

DENMARK HILL, 29*th Nov.*

I scarcely know what reply to make, or whether it is necessary to reply at all, to the letter of Mr. Jukes in your last number. There is no antagonism between his views and mine, though he seems heartily to desire that there should be, and with no conceivable motive but to obtain some appearance of it suppresses the latter half of the sentence he quotes from my letter.* It is true that he writes in willing ignorance of the Alps, and I in unwilling ignorance of the Wicklow hills; but the only consequent discrepancy of thought or of impression between us is, that Mr. Jukes, examining (by his own account) very old hills, which have been all but washed away to nothing, naturally, and rightly, attributes their present form, or want of form, to their prolonged ablutions, while I, examining new and lofty hills, of which, though

* The following is the sentence from Mr. Jukes' letter alluded to:—"'Therefore when Mr. Ruskin says that 'the forms of the Alps are quite visibly owing to the action of elevatory, contractile, and expansive forces,' I would entreat him to listen to those who have had their vision corrected by the laborious use of chain and theodolite and protractor for many toilsome years over similar forms."

much has been carried away, much is still left, as naturally and rightly ascribe a great part of their aspect to the modes of their elevation. The Alp-bred geologist has, however, this advantage, that (especially if he happen at spare times to have been interested in manual arts) he can hardly overlook the effects of denudation on a mountain-chain which sustains Venice on the delta of one of its torrents, and Antwerp on that of another; but the English geologist, however practised in the detection and measurement of faults filled in by cubes of fluor, may be pardoned for dimly appreciating the structure of a district in which a people strong enough to lay the foundation of the liberties of Europe in a single battle,* was educated in a fissure of the Lower Chalk.

I think, however, that, if Mr. Jukes can succeed in allaying his feverish thirst for battle, he will wish to withdraw the fourth paragraph of his letter, and, as a general formula, even the scheme which it introduces. That scheme, sufficiently accurate as an expression of one cycle of geological action, contains little more than was known to all leading geologists

* The Battle of Sempach (?). See the letters on 'The Italian Question,' at the beginning of the second volume.

† To the effect that 'the form of the ground is the result wholly of denudation.' For the 'scheme,' consisting of ten articles, see the note over-page.

five-and-twenty years ago, when I was working hard under Dr. Buckland at Oxford;* and it is so curiously unworthy of the present state of geological science, that I believe its author, in his calmer moments, will not wish to attach his name to an attempt at generalization at once so narrow, and so audacious. My experience of mountain-form is probably as much more extended than his, as my disposition to generalize respecting it is less;† and, although indeed the apparent limitation of the statement which he half quotes (probably owing to his general love of denudation) from my last letter, to the chain of the Alps, was intended only to attach to the words "quite visibly," yet, had I myself expanded that statement, I should not have assumed the existence of a sea, to relieve me from the

* Dr. William Buckland, the geologist, and at one time Dean of Westminster. He died in 1856. See 'Fors Clavigera,' 1873, Letter 34, p. 19.

† This and the following sentences allude to parts of the above-mentioned scheme. "The whole question," wrote Mr. Jukes, "depends on the relative dates of production of the lithological composition, the petrological structure, and the form of the surface." The scheme then attempts to sketch the "order of the processes which formed these three things," in ten articles, of which the following are specially referred to by Mr. Ruskin. "1. The formation of a great series of stratified rocks on the bed of a sea. . . . 3. The possible intrusion of great masses of granitic rock" in more or less fluent state; and 6, 7, 8, 9, which dealt with alternate elevation and depression, of which there might be "even more than one repetition."

difficulty of accounting for the existence of a lake; —I should not have assumed that all mountain-formations of investiture were marine; nor claimed the possession of a great series of stratified rocks without inquiring where they were to come from. I should not have thought "even more than one" an adequate expression for the possible number of elevations and depressions which may have taken place since the beginning of time on the mountain-chains of the world; nor thought myself capable of compressing into Ten Articles, or even into Thirty-nine, my conceptions of the working of the Power which led forth the little hills like lambs, while it rent or established the foundations of the earth; and set their birth-seal on the forehead of each in the infinitudes of aspect and of function which range between the violet-dyed banks of Thames and Seine, and the vexed Fury-Tower of Cotopaxi.

Not but that large generalizations are, indeed, possible with respect to the diluvial phenomena, among which my antagonist has pursued his—(scarcely amphibious?)—investigations. The effects of denudation and deposition are unvarying everywhere, and have been watched with terror and gratitude in all ages. In physical mythology they gave tusk to the Grææ, claw to the Gorgons, bull's frontlet to the floods of Aufidus and Po. They gave weapons

to the wars of Titans against Gods, and lifeless seed of life into the hand of Deucalion. Herodotus "rightly spelled" of them, where the lotus rose from the dust of Nile and leaned upon its dew; Plato rightly dreamed of them in his great vision of the disrobing of the Acropolis to its naked marble; the keen eye of Horace, half poet's, half farmer's (albeit unaided by theodolite), recognized them alike where the risen brooks of Vallombrosa, amidst the mountain-clamours, tossed their champed shingle to the Etrurian sea, and in the uncoveted wealth of the pastures,

"Quæ Liris quiet â
Mordet aquâ, taciturnus amnis." *

But the inner structure of the mountain chains is as varied as their substance; and to this day, in some of its mightier developments, so little understood, that my Neptunian opponent himself, in his address delivered at Cambridge in 1862, speaks of an arrangement of strata which it is difficult to traverse ten miles of Alpine limestone without finding an example of, as beyond the limits of theoretical imagination.†

I feel tempted to say more; but I have at present little time even for useful, and none for wanton,

* See Herodotus, ii. 92; Plato, Critias, 112; and Horace, Od. i. 31.

† The address was delivered by Mr. Jukes as President of the Geological Section of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, which met in 1862 at Cambridge. (See the Report of the Association, vol. xxxii. p. 54.)

controversy. Whatever information Mr. Jukes can afford me on these subjects (and I do not doubt he can afford me much), I am ready to receive, not only without need of his entreaty, but with sincere thanks. If he likes to try his powers of sight, "as corrected by the laborious use of the protractor," against mine, I will in humility abide the issue. But at present the question before the house is, as I understand it, simply whether glaciers excavate lake-basins or not. That, in spite of measurement and survey, here or elsewhere, seems to remain a question. May we answer the first, if answerable? That determined, I think I might furnish some other grounds of debate in this notable cause of Peebles against Plainstanes, provided that Mr. Jukes will not in future think his seniority gives him the right to answer me with disparagement instead of instruction, and will bear with the English "student's" weakness, which induces me, usually, to wish rather to begin by shooting my elephant than end by describing it out of my moral consciousness.* J. RUSKIN.

* Mr. Jukes' letter had concluded by recommending English geologists to pursue their studies at home, on the ground that "a student, commencing to learn comparative anatomy, does not think it necessary to go to Africa and kill an elephant." In the following number of the *Reader* (Dec. 10) Mr. Jukes wrote, in answer to the present letter, that he had not intended to imply any hostility towards Mr. Ruskin, with whose next letter (over-page) the discussion ended.

From 'The Reader,' December 10, 1864.

CONCERNING HYDROSTATICS.

NORWICH, *5th December.*

Your pages are not, I presume, intended for the dissemination of the elements of physical science. Your correspondent "M. A. C." has a good wit, and, by purchasing any common treatise on the barometer, may discover the propriety of exercising it on subjects with which he is acquainted. "G. M." deserves more attention, the confusion in his mind between increase of pressure and increase of density being a very common one.* It may be enough to note for him, and for those of your readers whom his letter may have embarrassed, that in any incompressible liquid a body of greater specific gravity than the liquid will sink to any depth, because the column which it forms, together with the vertical column of the liquid above it, always exceeds in total weight the column formed by the equal bulk of the liquid at its side, and the vertical column of liquid above that. Deep-sea soundings would be otherwise impossible. "G. M." may find the

* "M. A. C." wrote 'Concerning Stones,' and dealt—or attempted to deal—with "atmospheric pressure" in addition to the pressure of water alluded to in Mr. Ruskin's letter of November 26. The letter signed "G. M." was entitled 'Mr. Ruskin on Glaciers;' see next note. Both letters appeared in the *Reader* of December 3, 1864.

explanation of the other phenomena to which he alludes in any elementary work on hydrostatics, and will discover on a little reflection that the statement in my last letter * is simply true. Expanded, it is merely that, when we throw a stone into water, we substitute pressure of stone-surface for pressure of water-surface throughout the area of horizontal contact of the stone with the ground, and add the excess of the stone's weight over that of an equal bulk of water.

It is, however, very difficult for me to understand how any person so totally ignorant of every circumstance of glacial locality and action, as "G. M." shows himself to be in the paragraph beginning "It is very evident," could have had the courage to write a syllable on the subject. I will waste no time in reply, but will only assure him (with reference to his assertion that I "get rid of the rocks," etc.), that I never desire to get rid of anything but error, and that I should be the last person to desire to

* Not in the 'last letter,' but in the last but one,—see *ante*, p. 261, "A stone at the bottom of a stream," etc. The parts of "G. M.'s" letter specially alluded to by Mr. Ruskin are as follows:—

"It is very evident that the nearer the source of the glacier, the steeper will be the angle at which it advances from above, and the greater its power of excavation. . . . Mr. Ruskin gets rid of the rocks and *débris* on the under side of the glacier by supposing that they are pressed beyond the range of action in the solid body of the ice; but there must be a limit to this, however soft the matrix."

get rid of the glacial agency by friction, as I was, I believe, the first to reduce to a diagram the probable stages of its operation on the bases of the higher Alpine aiguilles.*

Permit me to add, in conclusion, that in future I can take no notice of any letters to which the writers do not think fit to attach their names. There can be no need of initials in scientific discussion, except to shield incompetence or license discourtesy.

J. RUSKIN.

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* See 'Modern Painters,' Part v., chap. 13, "On the Sculpture of Mountains," vol. iv. p. 174.

From 'Rendu's Theory of the Glaciers of Savoy,' Macmillan, 1874.

JAMES DAVID FORBES: HIS REAL GREATNESS.*

The incidental passage in "Fors," hastily written, on a contemptible issue, does not in the least indicate my sense of the real position of James Forbes among the men of his day. I have asked his son's† permission to add a few words expressive of my deeper feelings.

For indeed it seems to me that all these questions as to priority of ideas or observations are beneath debate among noble persons. What a man like Forbes first noticed, or demonstrated, is of no real moment to his memory. What he was, and how he taught, is of consummate moment. The actuality of his personal power, the sincerity and wisdom of

* In connection with the question of glacier-motion, Mr. Ruskin's estimate of Professor Forbes and his work is here reprinted from Rendu's 'Glaciers of Savoy' (Macmillan, 1874), pp. 205—207. For a passage on the same subject which was reprinted in the 'Glaciers of Savoy,' in addition to the new matter republished here, and for a statement of the course of glacier-science, and the relation of Forbes to Agassiz, the reader is referred to 'Fors Clavigera,' 1873, Letter 34, pp. 17—26. The 'incidental passage' consists of a review of Professor Tyndall's 'Forms of Water' (London, 1872), and the 'contemptible issue' was that of his position and Forbes' amongst geological discoverers.

† George Forbes, B.A., Professor of Natural Philosophy in the Andersonian University, Glasgow, and editor of 'The Glaciers of Savoy.'

his constant teaching, need no applause from the love they justly gained, and can sustain no diminution from hostility; for their proper honour is in their usefulness. To a man of no essential power, the accident of a discovery is apotheosis; to *him*, the former knowledge of all the sages of earth is as though it were not; he calls the ants of his own generation round him, to observe how he flourishes in his tiny forceps the grain of sand he has imposed upon Pelion. But from all such vindication of the claims of Forbes to mere discovery, I, his friend, would, for my own part, proudly abstain. I do not in the slightest degree care whether he was the first to see this, or the first to say that, or how many common persons had seen or said as much before. What I rejoice in knowing of him is that he had clear eyes and open heart for all things and deeds appertaining to his life; that whatever he discerned, was discerned impartially; what he said, was said securely; and that in all functions of thought, experiment, or communication, he was sure to be eventually right, and serviceable to mankind, whether out of the treasury of eternal knowledge he brought forth things new or old.

This is the essential difference between the work of men of true genius and the agitation of temporary and popular power. The first root of their

usefulness is in subjection of their vanity to their purpose. It is not in calibre or range of intellect that men vitally differ; every phase of mental character has honourable office; but the vital difference between the strong and the weak—or let me say rather, between the availing and valueless intelligence—is in the relation of the love of self to the love of the subject or occupation. Many an Alpine traveller, many a busy man of science, volubly represent to us their pleasure in the Alps; but I scarcely recognize one who would not willingly see them all ground down into gravel, on condition of his being the first to exhibit a pebble of it at the Royal Institution. Whereas it may be felt in any single page of Forbes's writing, or De Saussure's, that they love crag and glacier for their own sake's sake; that they question their secrets in reverent and solemn thirst: not at all that they may communicate them at breakfast to the readers of the Daily News,—and that, although there were no news, no institutions, no leading articles, no medals, no money, and no mob, in the world, these men would still labour, and be glad, though all their knowledge was to rest with them at last in the silence of the snows, or only to be taught to peasant children sitting in the shade of pines.

And whatever Forbes did or spoke during his noble life was in this manner patiently and permanently true. The passage of his lectures in which he shows the folly of Macaulay's assertion that "The giants of one generation are the pigmies of the next,"* beautiful in itself, is more interesting yet

* This saying of Macaulay's occurred in an address which, as M.P. for that city, he delivered at the opening of the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution, in 1846 (Nov. 4). Forbes' criticism of it and of the whole address may be found in a lecture introductory to a course on Natural Philosophy, delivered before the University of Edinburgh (Nov. 1 and 2, 1848), and entitled 'The Danger of Superficial Knowledge'; under which title it was afterwards printed, together with a newspaper report of Macaulay's address (London and Edinburgh, 1849). In the edition of Macaulay's speeches revised by himself, the sentence in question is omitted, though others of a like nature, such as "The profundity of one age is the shallowness of the next," are retained, and the whole argument of the address remains the same. (See Macaulay's Works, 8 vol. ed., Longmans, 1866. Vol. viii. p. 380, 'The Literature of Great Britain.') For a second mention of this saying by Mr. Ruskin, see also 'Remarks addressed to the Mansfield Art Night Class,' 1873, now reprinted in 'A Joy for Ever' (Ruskin's Works, vol. xi. p. 201).

The following are parts of the passage (extending over some pages) in Forbes' lecture alluded to by Mr. Ruskin:—

"How false, then, as well as arrogant, is the self-gratulation of those, who, forgetful of the struggles and painful efforts by which knowledge is increased, would place themselves, by virtue of their borrowed acquirements, in the same elevated position with their great teachers—nay, who, perceiving the dimness of light and feebleness of grasp, with which, often at first, great truths have been perceived and held, find food for pride in the superior clearness of their vision and tenacity of their apprehension!" Then, after quoting some words from Dr. Whewell's 'Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences,' vol. ii. p. 525, and after some

in the indication it gives of the general grasp and melodious tone of Forbes's *reverent* intellect, as opposed to the discordant insolence of modernism. His mind grew and took colour like an Alpine flower, rooted on rock, and perennial in flower; while Macaulay's swelled like a puff-ball in an unwholesome pasture, and projected itself far round in deleterious dust.

I had intended saying a few words more touching the difference in temper, and probity of heart, between Forbes and Agassiz, as manifested in the documents now* laid before the public. And as far as my own feelings are concerned, the death of Agassiz† would not have caused my withholding a word. For in all utterance of blame or praise, I have striven always to be kind to the living—just to the

further remarks, the lecturer thus continued:—"The activity of mind, the earnestness, the struggle after truth, the hopeless perplexity breaking up gradually into the fulness of perfect apprehension,—the dread of error, the victory over the imagination in discarding hypotheses, the sense of weakness and humility arising from repeated disappointments, the yearnings after a fuller revelation, and the sure conviction which attends the final advent of knowledge sought amidst difficulties and disappointments,—these are the lessons and the rewards of the discoverers who first put truth within our reach, but of which we who receive it at second-hand can form but a faint and lifeless conception." (See pp. 39—41 of 'The Danger of Superficial Knowledge.')

* In the edition of Rendu's 'Glaciers of Savoy' already alluded to.

† Forbes died Dec. 31, 1868; Agassiz in 1873; and De Saussure in 1845.

dead. But in deference to the wish of the son of Forbes, I keep silence: I willingly leave sentence to be pronounced by time, above their two graves.

JOHN RUSKIN.

The following letters,* one from Forbes to myself, written ten years ago, and the other from one of his pupils, received by me a few weeks since, must, however, take their due place among the other evidence on which such judgment is to be given.

J. R.

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* The letter from Forbes to Mr. Ruskin (dated December 2, 1864), was presumably elicited by the allusions to Forbes in Mr. Ruskin's letter to the *Reader* of November 26, 1864 (see *ante*, pp. 259 and 263). "Advancing years and permanently depressed state of health," ran the letter, "have taken the edge off the bitterness which the injustice I have experienced caused me during many years. But . . . the old fire revives within me when I see any one willing and courageous, like you, to remember an old friend, and to show that you do so."—The second letter speaks of the writer's "*boyish enthusiasm*," for Agassiz, an expression to which Mr. Ruskin appends this note:—"*The italics are mine.* I think this incidental and naive proof of the way in which Forbes had spoken of Agassiz to his class, of the greatest value and beautiful interest.—J. R."

II.

MISCELLANEOUS.

From 'The Artist and Amateur's Magazine,' (edited by E. V. Rippingille,) February 1844, pp. 314—319.

REFLECTIONS IN WATER.*

[*To the Editor of 'The Artist and Amateur's Magazine.'*]

Sir,—The phenomena of light and shade, rendered to the eye by the surface or substance of water, are so intricate and so multitudinous, that had I wished fully to investigate, or even fully to state them, a volume instead of a page would have been required for the task. In the paragraphs† which I devoted

* In the first edition of 'Modern Painters' (vol. i. p. 330) it was stated that "the horizontal lines cast by clouds upon the sea are not shadows, but reflections"; and that "on clear water near the eye there can never be even the appearance of shadow." This statement being questioned in a letter to the *Art Union Journal* (November 1843), and that letter being itself criticised in a review of 'Modern Painters' in the *Artist and Amateur's Magazine*, p. 262 (December 1843), there appeared in the last-named periodical two letters upon the subject, of which one was from J. H. Maw, the correspondent of the *Art Union*, and the other—that reprinted here—a reply from "The Author of 'Modern Painters.'"

† The passages in 'Modern Painters' referred to in this letter were considerably altered and enlarged in later editions of the work, and the exact words quoted are not to be found in it as finally revised. The reader is however referred to Vol. i., Part ii., § v., chap. i. 'Of Water as painted by the Ancients,' in whatever edition of the book he may chance to meet with or possess.

to the subject I expressed, as briefly as possible, the laws which are of most general application—with which artists are indeed so universally familiar, that I conceived it altogether unnecessary to prove or support them: but since I have expressed them in as few words as possible, I cannot afford to have any of those words missed or disregarded; and therefore when I say that on *clear* water, *near* the eye, there is no shadow, I must not be understood to mean that on *muddy* water, *far* from the eye, there is no shadow. As, however, your correspondent appears to deny my position in toto, and as many persons, on their first glance at the subject, might be inclined to do the same, you will perhaps excuse me for occupying a page or two with a more explicit statement, both of facts and principles, than my limits admitted in the "Modern Painters."

First, for the experimental proof of my assertion that "on clear water, near the eye, there is no shadow." Your correspondent's trial with the tub is somewhat cumbrous and inconvenient;* a far

* See the *Artist and Amateur's Magazine*, p. 313, where the author of the letter, to which this is a reply, adduced in support of his views the following experiment, viz.: to put a tub filled with clear water in the sunlight, and then taking an opaque screen with a hole cut in it, to place the same in such a position as to intercept the light falling upon the tub. Then, he argued, cover the hole over, and the tub will be in shadow; uncover it again, and a patch of light will fall on the water, proving that water is *not* 'insusceptible of light as well as shadow.'

more simple experiment will settle the matter. Fill a tumbler with water; throw into it a narrow strip of white paper; put the tumbler into sunshine; dip your finger into the water between the paper and the sun, so as to throw a shadow across the paper and on the water. The shadow will of course be distinct on the paper, but on the water absolutely and totally invisible.

This simple trial of the fact, and your explanation of the principle given in your ninth Number,* are sufficient proof and explanation of my assertion; and if your correspondent requires authority as well as ocular demonstration, he has only to ask Stanfield or Copley Fielding, or any other good painter of sea: the latter, indeed, was the person who first pointed out the fact to me when a boy. What then, it remains to be determined, are those lights and shades on the sea, which, for the sake of clearness, and because they appear such to the ordinary observer, I have spoken of as "horizontal lines," and which have every appearance of being cast by the clouds like real shadows? I imagined that I had been sufficiently explicit on this subject both at pages 330 and 363:† but your correspondent

* In the review of 'Modern Painters' mentioned above.

† Of the first edition of the first volume of 'Modern Painters.' The size of the book (and consequently the paging) was afterwards altered to suit the engravings contained in the last three volumes.

appears to have confused himself by inaccurately receiving the term *shadow* as if it meant darkness of any kind; whereas my second sentence—"every *darkness* on water is reflection, not shadow,"—might have shown him that I used it in its particular sense, as meaning the absence of *positive* light on a visible surface. Thus, in endeavouring to support his assertion that the shadows on the sea are as distinct as on a grass field, he says that they are so by contrast with the "light *reflected* from its polished surface;" thus showing at once that he has been speaking and thinking all along, not of shadow, but of the absence of reflected light—an absence which is no more shadow than the absence of the image of a piece of white paper in a mirror is shadow on the mirror.

The question, therefore, is one of terms rather than of things; and before proceeding it will be necessary for me to make your correspondent understand thoroughly what is meant by the term shadow as opposed to that of reflection.

Let us stand on the sea-shore on a cloudless night, with a full moon over the sea, and a swell on the water. Of course a long line of splendour will be seen on the waves under the moon, reaching from the horizon to our very feet. But are those waves between the moon and us *actually* more

illuminated than any other part of the sea? Not one whit. The whole surface of the sea is under the same full light, but the waves between the moon and us are the only ones which are in a position to reflect that light to our eyes. The sea on both sides of that path of light is in perfect darkness—almost black. But is it so from shadow? Not so, —for there is nothing to intercept the moonlight from it: it is so from position, because it cannot reflect any of the rays which fall on it to our eyes, but reflects instead the dark vault of the night sky. Both the darkness and the light on it, therefore—and they are as violently contrasted as may well be—are nothing but reflections, the whole surface of the water being under one blaze of moonlight, entirely unshaded by any intervening object whatsoever.*

Now, then, we can understand the cause of the chiaro-scuro of the sea by daylight with lateral sun. Where the sunlight reaches the water, every ripple, wave, or swell reflects to the eye from some of its planes either the image of the sun or some portion of the neighbouring bright sky. Where the cloud interposes between the sun and sea, all these luminous

* It may be worth noting that the optical delusion above explained is described at some length by Mr. Herbert Spencer ('The Study of Sociology,' p. 191, London, 1874) as one of the commonest instances of popular ignorance.

reflections are prevented, and the raised planes of the waves reflect only the dark under-surface of the cloud; and hence, by the multiplication of the images, spaces of light and shade are produced, which lie on the sea precisely in the position of real or positive lights and shadows—corresponding to the outlines of the clouds—laterally cast, and therefore seen in addition to, and at the same time with, the ordinary or direct reflection, vigorously contrasted, the lights being often a blaze of gold, and the shadows a dark leaden grey; and yet, I repeat, they are no more real lights, or real shadows, on the sea, than the image of a black coat is a shadow on a mirror, or the image of white paper a light upon it.

Are there, then, *no* shadows whatsoever upon the sea? Not so. My assertion is simply that there are none on clear water near the eye. I shall briefly state a few of the circumstances which give rise to real shadow in distant effect.

I. Any admixture of opaque colouring matter, as of mud, chalk, or powdered granite, renders water capable of distinct shadow, which is cast on the earthy and solid particles suspended in the liquid. None of the seas on our south-eastern coast are so clear as to be absolutely incapable of shade; and the faint tint, though scarcely perceptible to a near

observer,* is sufficiently manifest when seen in large extent from a distance, especially when contrasted, as your correspondent says, with reflected lights. This was one reason for my introducing the words —"near the eye."

There is, however, a peculiarity in the appearances of such shadows which requires especial notice. It is not merely the transparency of water, but its polished surface, and consequent reflective power, which render it incapable of shadow. A perfectly opaque body, if its power of reflection be perfect, receives no shadow (this I shall presently prove); and therefore, in any lustrous body, the incapability of shadow is in proportion to the power of reflection. Now the power of reflection in water varies with the angle of the impinging ray, being of course greatest when that angle is least: and thus, when we look along the water at a low angle, its power of reflection maintains its incapability of shadow to a considerable extent, in spite of its containing suspended opaque matter; whereas, when we look *down* upon water from a height, as we then receive from it only rays which have fallen on it at a large angle, a

* Of course, if water be perfectly foul, like that of the Rhine or Arve, it receives a shadow nearly as well as mud. Yet the succeeding observations on its reflective power are applicable to it, even in this state.

great number of those rays are unreflected from the surface, but penetrate beneath the surface, and are then reflected* from the suspended opaque matter: thus rendering shadows clearly visible which, at a small angle, would have been altogether unperceived.

II. But it is not merely the presence of opaque matter which renders shadows visible on the sea seen from a height. The eye, when elevated above the water, receives rays reflected from the bottom, of which, when *near* the water, it is insensible. I have seen the bottom at seven fathoms, so that I could count its pebbles, from the cliffs of the Cornish coast; and the broad effect of the light and

* It must always be remembered that there are two kinds of reflection,—one from polished bodies, giving back rays of light unaltered; the other from unpolished bodies, giving back rays of light altered. By the one reflection we see the images of other objects on the surface of the reflecting object; by the other we are made aware of that surface itself. The difference between these two kinds of reflection has not been well worked by writers on optics; but the great distinction between them is, that the rough body reflects most rays when the angle at which the rays impinge is largest, and the polished body when the angle is smallest. It is the reflection from polished bodies exclusively which I usually indicate by the term; and that from rough bodies I commonly distinguish as "positive light;" but as I have here used the

shade of the bottom is discernible at enormous depths. In fact, it is difficult to say at what depth the rays returned from the bottom become absolutely ineffective—perhaps not until we get fairly out into blue water. Hence, with a white or sandy shore, shadows forcible enough to afford conspicuous variety of colour may be seen from a height of two or three hundred feet.

III. The actual colour of the sea itself is an important cause of shadow in distant effect. Of the ultimate causes of local colour in water I am not ashamed to confess my total ignorance, for I believe Sir David Brewster himself has not elucidated them. Every river in Switzerland has a different hue. The lake of Geneva, commonly blue,

term in its general sense, the explanation of the distinction becomes necessary. All light and shade on matter is caused by reflection of some kind; and the distinction made throughout this paper between reflected and positive light, and between *real* and pseudo shadow, is nothing more than the distinction between two kinds of reflection.

I believe some of Bouguer's* experiments have been rendered inaccurate,—not in their general result, nor in *ratio* of quantities, but in the quantities themselves,—by the difficulty of distinguishing between the two kinds of reflected rays.

* Pierre Bouguer, author of, amongst other works, the 'Traité d'Optique sur la Gradation de la Lumière.' He was born in 1698, and died in 1758.

appears, under a fresh breeze, striped with blue and bright red; and the hues of coast-sea are as various as those of a dolphin; but, whatever be the cause of their variety, their intensity is, of course, dependent on the presence of sun-light. The sea under shade is commonly of a cold grey hue; in sun-light it is susceptible of vivid and exquisite colouring: and thus the forms of clouds are traced on its surface, not by light and shade, but by variation of *colour*,—by greys opposed to greens, blues to rose-tints, etc. All such phenomena are chiefly visible from a height and a distance; and thus furnished me with additional reasons for introducing the words—"near the eye."

IV. Local colour is, however, the cause of one beautiful kind of chiaro-scuro, visible when we are close to the water—shadows cast, not *on* the waves, but through them, as through misty air. When a wave is raised so as to let the sun-light through a portion of its body, the contrast of the transparent chrysoprase green of the illuminated parts with the darkness of the shadowed is exquisitely beautiful.

Hitherto, however, I have been speaking chiefly of the *transparency* of water as the source of its incapability of shadow. I have still to demonstrate the effect of its polished surface.

Let your correspondent pour an ounce or two of

quicksilver into a flat white saucer, and, throwing a strip of white paper into the middle of the mercury, as before into the water, interpose an upright bit of stick between it and the sun: he will then have the pleasure of seeing the shadow of the stick sharply defined on the paper and the edge of the saucer, while on the intermediate portion of mercury it will be totally invisible.* Mercury is a perfectly opaque body, and its incapability of shadow is entirely owing to the perfection of its polished surface. Thus, then, whether water be considered as transparent or reflective, (and according to its position it is one or the other, or partially both—for in the exact degree that it *is* the one, it is *not* the other,) it is equally incapable of shadow. But as on distant water, so also on near water, when broken, pseudo shadows take place, which are in reality nothing more than the aggregates of reflections. In the illuminated space of the wave, from every plane turned towards the sun there flashes an image of the sun; in the *un*-illuminated space there is seen on every such plane only the dark image of the interposed body. Every wreath of the foam, every jet of the spray, reflects in the sunlight a thousand diminished suns, and refracts their rays into a thousand colours; while in the shadowed parts the

* The mercury must of course be perfectly clean.

same broken parts of the wave appear only in dead, cold white; and thus pseudo shadows are caused, occupying the position of real shadows, defined in portions of their edge with equal sharpness: and yet, I repeat, they are no more real shadows than the image of a piece of black cloth is a shadow on a mirror.

But your correspondent will say, "What does it matter to me, or to the artist, whether they *are* shadows or not? They are darkness, and they supply the place of shadows, and that it is all I contend for." Not so. They do *not* supply the place of shadows; they are divided from them by this broad distinction, that while shadow causes uniform deepening of the ground-tint in the objects which it affects, these pseudo shadows are merely portions of that ground-tint itself undeepened, but cut out and rendered conspicuous by flashes of light irregularly disposed around it. The ground-tint both of shadowed and illumined parts is precisely the same—a pure pale grey, catching as it moves the hues of the sky and clouds; but on this, in the illumined spaces, there fall touches and flashes of intense reflected light, which are absent in the shadow. If, for the sake of illustration, we consider the wave as hung with a certain quantity of lamps, irregularly disposed, the shape and extent of

a shadow on that wave will be marked by the lamps being all put out within its influence, while the tint of the water itself is entirely unaffected by it.

The works of Stanfield will supply your correspondent with perfect and admirable illustrations of this principle. His water-tint is equally clear and luminous whether in sunshine or shade; but the whole lustre of the illumined parts is attained by bright isolated touches of reflected light.

The works of Turner will supply us with still more striking examples, especially in cases where slanting sunbeams are cast from a low sun along breakers, when the shadows will be found in a state of perpetual transition, now defined for an instant on a mass of foam, then lost in an interval of smooth water, then coming through the body of a transparent wave, then passing off into the air upon the dust of the spray—supplying, as they do in nature, exhaustless combinations of ethereal beauty. From Turner's habit of choosing for his subjects sea much broken with foam, the shadows in his works are more conspicuous than in Stanfield's, and may be studied to greater advantage. To the works of these great painters, those of Vandevelde may be opposed for instances of the impossible. The black shadows of this latter painter's near waves

supply us with innumerable and most illustrative examples of everything which sea shadows are *not*.

Finally, let me recommend your correspondent, if he wishes to obtain perfect knowledge of the effects of shadow on water, whether calm or agitated, to go through a systematic examination of the works of Turner. He will find *every* phenomenon of this kind noted in them with the most exquisite fidelity. The Alnwick Castle, with the shadow of the bridge cast on the dull surface of the moat, and mixing with the reflection, is the most finished piece of water-painting with which I am acquainted. Some of the recent Venices have afforded exquisite instances of the change of colour in water caused by shadow, the illumined water being transparent and green, while in the shade it loses its own colour, and takes the blue of the sky.

But I have already, sir, occupied far too many of your valuable pages, and I must close the subject, although hundreds of points occur to me which I have not yet illustrated.* The discussion respecting the Grotto of Capri is somewhat irrelevant, and

* Among other points, I have not explained why water, though it has no shadow, has a dark side. The cause of this is the Newtonian law noticed below, that water weakens the rays passing through its mass, though it reflects none; and, also, that it reflects rays from both surfaces.

I will not enter upon it, as thousands of laws respecting light and colour are there brought into play, in addition to the water's incapability of shadow.* But it is somewhat singular that the Newtonian principle, which your correspondent enunciates in conclusion, is the *very cause* of the incapability of shadow which he disputes. I am not, however, writing a treatise on optics, and therefore can at present do no more than simply explain what the Newtonian law actually signifies, since, by your correspondent's enunciation of it, "pellucid substances reflect light only from their surfaces," an inexperienced reader might be led to conclude that *opaque* bodies reflected light from something else than their surfaces.

The law is, that whatever number of rays escape reflection at the surface of water, pass through its body without further reflection, being therein weakened, but not reflected; but that, where they pass *out* of the water again, as, for instance, if there be air-bubbles at the bottom, giving an under-surface to the water, there a number of rays are reflected from that under-surface, and do *not* pass out of the

* The review of 'Modern Painters' had mentioned the Grotto of Capri, near Naples, as 'a very beautiful illustration of the great quantity of light admitted or contained in water,' and on this Mr. J. H. Maw had commented.

water, but return to the eye; thus causing the bright luminosity of the under bubbles. Thus water reflects from both its surfaces—it reflects it when passing out as well as when entering; but it reflects none whatever from its own interior mass. If it did, it would be capable of shadow.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

THE AUTHOR OF 'MODERN PAINTERS.'

From 'The London Review,' May 16, 1861.

THE REFLECTION OF RAINBOWS IN WATER.*

To the Editor of 'The London Review.'

Sir,—I do not think there is much difficulty in the rainbow business. We cannot see the reflection of the same rainbow which we behold in the sky, but we see the reflection of another invisible one within it. Suppose A and B, fig. 1, are two falling raindrops, and the spectator is at S, and X Y is the water surface. If R A S be a sun ray giving,

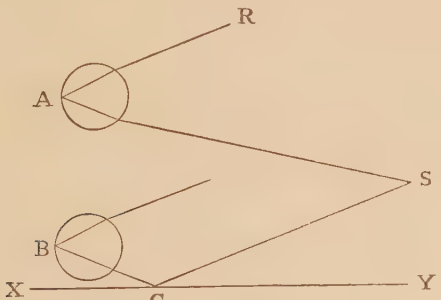

Fig. 1.

we will say, the red ray in the visible rainbow, the ray, B C S, will give the same red ray, reflected from the water at C.

* The *London Review* of May 4 contained a critique of the Exhibition of the Society of Water-colours, which included a notice of Mr. Duncan's 'Shiplake, on the Thames' (No. 52). In this picture the artist had painted a rainbow reflected in the water, the truth of which to nature was questioned by some of his critics. Mr. Ruskin's was not the only letter in support of the picture's truth.

It is rather a long business to examine the lateral angles, and I have not time to do it ; but I presume the result would be that if a m b, fig. 2, be the visible rainbow, and x y the water horizon, the reflection will be the dotted line c e d, reflecting, that is to say, the invisible bow, c n d ; thus, the terminations of the arcs of the visible and reflected bows do not coincide.

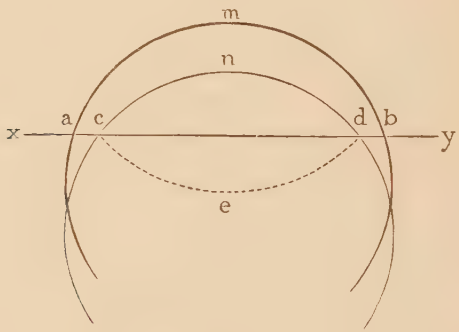

Fig. 2.

The interval, m n, depends on the position of the spectator with respect to the water surface. The thing can hardly ever be seen in nature, for if there be rain enough to carry the bow to the water surface, that surface will be ruffled by the drops, and incapable of reflection.

Whenever I have seen a rainbow over water (sea, mostly), it has stood on it reflectionless ; but inter-

rupted conditions of rain might be imagined which would present reflection on near surfaces.

Always very truly yours,

J. RUSKIN.

7th May, 1861.

From 'The Proceedings of the Ashmolean Society,' May 10, 1841.

A LANDSLIP NEAR GIAGNANO.

"The Secretary read a letter* from J. Ruskin, Esq., of Christ Church, dated Naples, February 7, 1841, and addressed to Dr. Buckland,† giving a description of a recent landslip near that place, which had occasioned a great loss of life: it occurred at the village of Giagnano, near Castel-a-mare, on the 22nd of January last. The village is situated on the slope of a conical hill of limestone, not less than 1400 feet in height, and composed of thin beds similar to those which form the greater part of the range of Sorrento. The hill in question is nearly isolated, though forming part of the range, the slope of its sides uniform, and inclined at not less than 40°. Assisted by projecting ledges of the beds of rock, a soil has accumulated on this slope three or four feet in depth, rendering it quite smooth and uniform. The higher parts are covered in many places with brushwood, the lower with vines trellised over old mulberry trees. There are slight evidences of recent aqueous action on the sides of the hill, a few gullies descending towards the east side of the village. After two days of heavy rain, on the evening of

* The present letter is the earliest in date of any in these volumes.

† See note to p. 269.

January 22, a torrent of water burst down on the village to the west of these gullies, and the soil accumulated on the side of the hill gave way in a wedge-shaped mass, the highest point being about 600 feet above the houses, and slid down, leaving the rocks perfectly bare. It buried the nearest group of cottages, and remained heaped up in longitudinal layers above them, whilst the water ran in torrents over the edge towards the plain, sweeping away many more houses in its course. To the westward of this point another slip took place of smaller dimensions than the first, but coming on a more crowded part of the village, overwhelmed it completely, occasioning the loss of 116 lives."

From 'The Athenæum,' February 14, 1857.

THE GENTIAN.*

DENMARK HILL, *Feb.* 10.

If your correspondent 'Y. L. Y.' will take a little trouble in inquiring into the history of the gentian, he will find that, as is the case with most other flowers, there are many species of it. He knows the dark blue gentian (*Gentiana acaulis*) because it grows, under proper cultivation, as healthily in England as on the Alps. And he has *not* seen the pale blue gentian (*Gentiana verna*) shaped like a star, and of the colour of the sky, because that flower grows unwillingly, if at all, except on its native rocks. I consider it, therefore, as specially characteristic of Alpine scenery, while its beauty, to my mind, far exceeds that of the darker species.

I have, etc.,

J. RUSKIN.

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* In the 'Notes on the Turner Gallery at Marlborough House,' 1856, (p. 23) Mr. Ruskin speaks of the "pale ineffable azure" of the gentian. The present letter was written in reply to one signed 'Y. L. Y.' in the *Athenæum* of February 7, 1857, in which this expression was criticized. In a subsequent issue of the same journal (February 21) Mr. Ruskin's querist denied the ignorance imputed to him, and still questioned the propriety of calling the gentian 'pale,' without at the same time distinguishing the two species.

[Date and place of original publication unknown.]

ON THE STUDY OF NATURAL HISTORY.

To Adam White, of Edinburgh.

It would be pleasing alike to my personal vanity and to the instinct of making myself serviceable, which I will fearlessly say is as strong in me as vanity, if I could think that any letter of mine would be helpful to you in the recommendation of the study of natural history, as one of the best elements of early as of late education. I believe there is no child so dull or so indolent but it may be roused to wholesome exertion by putting some practical and personal work on natural history within its range of daily occupation; and, once aroused, few pleasures are so innocent, and none so constant. I have often been unable, through sickness or anxiety, to follow my own art work, but I have never found natural history fail me, either as a delight or a medicine. But for children it must be curtly and wisely taught. We must *show* them things, not tell them names. A deal chest of drawers is worth many books to them, and a well-guided country walk worth a hundred lectures.

I heartily wish you, not only for your sake, but

for that of the young thistle buds of Edinburgh, success in promulgating your views, and putting them in practice.

Always believe me faithfully yours,

J. RUSKIN.

END OF VOLUME I.